

IN AMERICA'S WAKE
A COMPARISON OF RISING POWER FOREIGN POLICIES

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The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.



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ABSTRACT

This study makes a historical comparison of American foreign policy in the nineteenth century and Chinese foreign policy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in order to better understand the actions of rising powers in world orders already occupied by an incumbent global hegemon. The author considers those external and internal factors that contributed to each country's foreign policies and examines how state actions evolve over time as comprehensive national power increases. The author concludes that both America and China exhibited similar behaviors in their international relations, despite significant differences in internal organizing principles and disparate polities. If Chinese patterns of behavior continue to mirror those of the U.S., and China's growth and development trends continue apace, American influence in the Asia-Pacific region will continue to ebb in relative terms, as British influence in the Western Hemisphere waned in the presence of a waxing America. Whether this transition in relative power between America and China results in a hegemonic war, as past transitions have, or whether it will be peaceful, as the transition between British to American hegemony was, remains to be seen. This thesis concludes with a number of speculations about China's future and the conditions that make a hegemonic war more and less likely in the Asia-Pacific.



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Introduction

This thesis considers whether America's foreign policy as a rising power in the nineteenth century is similar to China's foreign policy as a rising power in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Additionally, it evaluates the prevailing conditions as the U.S. supplanted Britain as regional hegemon in the Americas. Further, it assesses whether the commonalities between American and Chinese foreign policies shed light on the future of the Asia-Pacific region as China's rise competes with American interests.

American foreign policy in the nineteenth century was defined by its rejection of the prevailing system of government in Europe, namely monarchism. Accordingly, American statesmen resisted efforts by European nations to spread their balance of power system of alliances to the Western Hemisphere, a position captured by President James Monroe's watershed message to Congress in 1823 outlining principles that would later become the Monroe Doctrine. Similarly, early Chinese foreign policy rejected the bipolar world that emerged after the Second World War, seeking instead to create a more pluralistic world order responsive to the interests of developing nations.

Today, China has numerous territorial disputes in Asia and sees involvement by the U.S. and its allies as threatening to its national security. In response, China has become more bellicose in word and deed, and claimed sovereignty over much of the South China Sea through the promulgation of the so-called Nine-Dash Line. Further, it has declared an Air Defense Identification Zone over part of the East China Sea that extends into airspace claimed by both Japan and Taiwan, and continues to challenge aircraft transiting this airspace. Additionally, it has engaged in extensive land reclamation on contested reefs and rocks, building ports and airstrips capable of supporting military vessels and aircraft, as well as stationing surface-to-air missiles on territory disputed by its Southeast Asian neighbors.

China's economic and military development constitutes the most significant strategic challenge for America since the end of the Cold War. American security alliances with Japan, the Philippines, and Taiwan threaten to entangle the U.S. in conflict related to those nations' territorial disputes with China, itself a vital part of the global

economy and major U.S. trading partner. As such, any insights history can provide as to how this situation is likely to develop should be used to both inform decisions and prepare for potential conflict and compromise.

There are a number of limitations to this study. First, no effort is made to dissect and compare the nuances of American and Chinese culture and how those cultures influenced foreign policy decisions. Culture undoubtedly plays a role in foreign policy, and is particularly important in constructivist theories of international relations. However, enough commonality between American and Chinese actions on the world stage exists to accept the contention that internal differences among states can be abstracted away, and that states can be considered unitary actors with similar motivations.

Another limitation to this study is that it does not evaluate the legality of state actions in relation to international law. While determinations of legality certainly impact foreign policy outcomes, both America and China have eschewed efforts to constrain their options through supranational adjudication. Moreover, esoteric discussions of legal interpretations and precedents in a relatively short work meant for the general reader would likely detract from the ultimate goal of this paper.

Lastly, the intent of this work is not to make judgments or pronouncements as to the propriety or impropriety of any particular course of action. The author is unconvinced that *ex post facto* determinations of legitimacy or illegitimacy have successfully curtailed the future actions of other international actors. As the old adage goes, “history is written by the winners.” The purpose of this study is to compare American and Chinese foreign policies during specific periods in their development in the hopes that this comparison will yield useful insights and inform future expectations. To this end it is devoid of value judgments.

For definitional purposes, Spanish America, Latin America, and former Spanish colonies are largely used interchangeably. In the context of Chapter 1, these related to Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean and former Spanish holdings in the Pacific. The Americas refers to the various nations in the Western Hemisphere, and Britain in the nineteenth century is referred to as an American power because of its colonial possessions in the Americas. Lastly, modern-day naming conventions are

preferred over historical names to ease the reader's comprehension of the geography involved.

The argument of this study is that rising powers engage in similar behavior as they transition from economically and militarily weak actors toward regional hegemony. In the case of the United States, its policies tended toward neutrality and defensiveness in the early part of the nineteenth century. However, as its comprehensive national power grew, and as its long-held desires for territorial expansion became achievable, it engaged in more assertive behavior at the expense of neighboring countries.¹ Moreover, in the later part of the century it found its relationship with Britain, the incumbent global hegemon,² similarly transformed as American power waxed and British power waned.³ Consequently, Britain had to decide whether to pursue a strategy of containment or accommodation toward America.⁴

The People's Republic of China's (PRC) history of foreign policy enjoys many similarities to American foreign policy in the nineteenth century. While Chinese actions under Mao Tse-tung were generally more aggressive than subsequent leaders,⁵ it embraced similar notions of neutrality and defensiveness. Its phenomenal growth in the past two decades has brought its national interests into conflict with its neighbors, and by way of security alliances and global trade, with the U.S.⁶ As China's power waxes in the Asia-Pacific, and America's wanes in relative terms, the question remains how this dynamic will play out and whether containment or accommodation will predominate. The answer lies somewhere along the spectrum of great-power war and peaceful coexistence, and this study considers the elements shaping that future.⁷

1 Alejandro Alvarez, *The Monroe Doctrine, Its Importance in the International Life of the States of the New World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1924), 19.

2 Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion*, 3rd ed, Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2002), 14.

3 Jay Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America* (Macmillan, 2011), 17; W. W. Rostow, *British Economy of the Nineteenth Century. Essays by W.W. Rostow.*, Reprint edition (Oxford University Press, 1948), 1.

4 Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914*, 2.

5 Yongjin Zhang and Greg Austin, *Power and Responsibility in Chinese Foreign Policy* (ANU Press, 2014), 25, <https://www.oapen.org/search?identifier=469191>.

6 David Ochmanek, "Sustaining U.S. Leadership in the Asia-Pacific Region," Product Page, Perspectives (RAND Corporation, 2015), 1, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE142.html>.

7 Zhang and Austin, *Power and Responsibility in Chinese Foreign Policy*, 2.

Chapter 1

U.S. Foreign Policy (1790 – 1904)

U.S. foreign policy during the nineteenth century was driven largely by economic development and Britain was often at the center of its concerns. Britain's head start on industrialization meant most foreign manufacturers fared poorly for much of the century. They were often unable to compete effectively in low-tariff systems brought about by trade agreements, which became more common as mercantilism waned. Both America and Britain sought to establish free trade throughout the Western Hemisphere, hoping to open nascent markets in Spanish America to their goods.¹ Unquestionably, Britain's economic success was underwritten by its strong capital markets and the unmatched strength of the Royal Navy.²

Britain, with its Canadian and Caribbean territories, was also an American power.³ It saw the U.S. as a threat to its interests in the Western Hemisphere, and competed with it for economic hegemony there.⁴ Importantly, Britain largely refrained from extending its colonial system to Latin America after Spain's defeat in the Napoleonic wars.⁵ Instead, it pursued an agenda of free trade, which allowed it to operate commercially unchallenged. This meant British and American interests were often in alignment in the early part of the century.

It was in this context that the foreign policy of an aspirant country, recently freed from the yoke of British colonialism and struggling to consolidate its independence and cohere as a nation, took shape. As such, American foreign policy in the nineteenth century was often opportunistic, adhering to the dictates of its economy and domestic politics. From the beginning, however, the U.S. had demonstrated a desire to separate itself from the political system of the Old World. Namely, it rejected the balance of power politics which, in its view, was the source of ceaseless, internecine wars in Europe.

Despite its victory in the Revolutionary War, the thirteen former colonies which formed the U.S. were very much an experiment in governance.⁶ It was not clear, even up to the time of the U.S. Civil War, that this model would work, nor that it should be emulated.⁷ Particularly before the Civil War, Americans tended to identify more strongly with their state over their nation.⁸ Thus, early nineteenth century America was externally

militarily and economically weak as compared to the European powers, and internally fractious and vulnerable.⁹

The U.S. Constitution, enacted in 1787, sought to address the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation and to strike a better balance between the authority of the federal and state governments. This centralized the powers needed to see off foreign threats to its internal unity while preserving many devolved authorities of America's constituent states. Nonetheless, considerable regional differences persisted, one of the starkest and most contentious being slavery. Throughout the first half of the century, the preservation of slavery as a Southern institution would contort American policy, culminating in four years of bloody civil war. From this war America emerged a powerful and united force on the global stage, ready to challenge its erstwhile colonial master. Early American foreign policy had as a central tenet anti-colonialism in the Western Hemisphere and the pursuit of economic and political independence from Britain.¹⁰ These aims sprung from the insecurities of a nascent republic encircled by the colonies of hostile European powers. At the turn of the century Mexico, Louisiana, the Floridas, and Cuba all belonged to Spain. Canada was a British colony and an ever present northern threat. Alaska had been claimed by Russia, which had expansionary aspirations for the Pacific Northwest.¹¹

Moreover, Europeans had been embroiled in revolutionary and inter-state wars since the 1790s, and attempted to use America as a pawn to further their aims. In response, the U.S. declared “neutral rights” and the principle that U.S. territories would not be used to wage European wars. Americans saw themselves threatened so long as fractious European powers retained colonies in North America.¹² To this end, President Monroe submitted his annual message to Congress in December 1823, in which he articulated the long-held views of U.S. statesmen toward Europe and the Americas. Monroe’s message declared the Western Hemisphere off limits to further European colonization and political intervention.¹³ It distinguished between Old and New World political systems and expressly rejected European monarchism and its concomitant “balance-of-power” politics. Instead, democratic republicanism would guide the New World.¹⁴ Further, Monroe's message was a proscription for European powers, while

retaining flexibility for American foreign policy.¹⁵ Lastly, it sought to politically and economically isolate the Spanish colonies in the Americas from Spain.

By the 1840s Monroe's principles became his doctrine, which was being used to justify American territorial expansion and annexation as preemptive security measures and to bolster U.S. commercial interests. After the Civil War, the Monroe Doctrine yet again took on new characteristics. American regional hegemony was undeniable and the U.S. adopted an assertive, economically expansionist posture. It repeatedly intervened in border and financial disputes between Europe and Latin America and took a paternalistic and racially superior view to its “uncivilized” southern brethren. It pursued its economic interests at the expense of Latin American sovereignty and largely completed its territorial expansion after winning a war against Spain in 1898. As the British Empire waxed throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, America was dependent on its capital and markets for growth. In the late nineteenth century it was America that became the world's industrial powerhouse, a trend which would continue unabated into the twentieth century.



Figure 1: U.S. Territorial Expansion

Source: <https://www.learner.org/interactives/historymap/states.html>

1790s

George Washington's Farewell Address of 1796 emphasized a foreign policy of non-entanglement in internecine European affairs.¹⁶ This policy guided U.S. statesmen for decades. In particular George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson believed the U.S. should be free to progress and develop in accordance with its own path and principles, "free from the complications of the European political system".¹⁷

America's desire to rid itself of European balance-of-power politics was largely a result of the constant warring between those powers, despite its benefiting directly from French and Spanish support during the Revolutionary War.¹⁸ This incessant warring led U.S. statesmen to view the existence of European colonialism in the Americas as a threat to national security and commercial interests.¹⁹ So long as there were territories to fight over the Europeans would do so and the U.S., it was feared, would be unable to avoid being drawn in.

Meanwhile, the political environment in the U.S. had shifted to a two-party system comprised of the Federalists (Alexander Hamilton) and Democratic-Republicans (Jefferson/James Madison).²⁰ Within this system, attitudes toward non-alliance and non-entanglement were largely political in nature rather than commercial. In fact, most U.S. statesmen looked favorably upon establishing trade agreements with Europe that would reduce tariffs and open markets for U.S. exports.²¹ They saw this as a mechanism for deconstructing the monopolistic commercial system of Old World monarchical rule.

U.S. domestic political divisions mirrored economic differences between the states and were influenced by commercial relationships with Britain. The Federalists saw connections with Britain as a necessary evil in pursuit of U.S. economic growth and development. Further, they demonstrated a greater willingness to compromise on contentious issues to advance U.S. interests and saw Britain as a model for centralized governmental control and fiscal and monetary policy. The Republicans, on the other hand, advocated for free trade, freedom of navigation on the open seas, and a liberal international order.²² In particular they represented U.S. agricultural interests. Despite

these differences, both parties sought long-term economic independence from Britain as their ultimate goal.

American trade in the 1790s was largely limited to shipping, the re-exportation of goods from Europe and the Americas, and exports of cash crops and foodstuffs.²³ The domestic market was relatively unformed with the population mostly engaging in subsistence farming and household manufactures. The 4 million people living in the U.S. in 1790 were “almost evenly divided between the North and South”. Very little urbanization had taken place with 3.7 million people living in rural areas. A considerable obstacle to growth of the domestic market was transportation. The high cost of overland shipping, particularly over the Appalachian Mountains, meant only the most expensive goods were carried.²⁴ Additionally, access to the Mississippi River was controlled by Spain, who imposed high fees on downstream travel. Further, foreign trade was constrained by the mercantile policies of European monarchies.²⁵

International trade with Latin America for both the U.S. and Britain was insignificant at the time as most of Latin America was effectively economically isolated by the mercantile policies of monarchical Spain.²⁶ Early U.S.-Spanish relations had suffered from Spain’s refusal to grant America freedom of navigation along the Mississippi River for its territories along the east bank and a prohibition on trade with the Spanish colonies.²⁷ As early as 1774, merchants in the East were stymied by Spanish colonial trade restrictions and farmers in the West were stifled by a lack of access to the Mississippi to export excess agricultural goods without paying high fees. Further, Spain repeatedly tried to drive a wedge between Americans in the East and West, offering the latter special trade and financial incentives as a means of gaining influence at the expense of the East.²⁸

These circumstances contributed to U.S. policy objectives for obtaining the Spanish territories along the Mississippi, the coast, and parts of the Caribbean.²⁹ In 1797, during a meeting between representatives of the British and American governments, it was agreed that the U.S. would eventually gain the port of Havana in Cuba, the Floridas (East and West), and the Louisianan Territory.³⁰ Likewise, America would have access to any inter-oceanic canal that crossed through Central America. In exchange, the U.S.

furnished \$5 million toward the nascent independence movements in Spanish America, which were being directly supported by the British.

1800 – 1815

Within Spain, internal divisions and disputes continued after the invasion by Napoleon in 1808 and subsequent French withdrawal in 1813.³¹ With its navy defeated by the British at Trafalgar in 1805 and its army and finances wrecked by the Napoleonic wars, Spain had fleeting success in reestablishing its authority over its colonies.³² Further obstructing Spain's efforts at control was the nature of Spanish America, which included vast, sparsely populated areas with limited means of communication and infrastructure.³³ Spain's inability to reassert colonial control triggered wide-spread revolts in South America in the 1810s, supported by both the British and Americans.³⁴ Those colonies used as part of their justification for revolt the illegitimacy of the Napoleonic regime established over Spain and her territories during the war years. Britain and America quickly opened contraband trades with South America, capitalizing on the perceived illegitimacy of the regime.³⁵

From the beginning, the former Spanish colonies demonstrated a desire to confederate the nations of the Americas.³⁶ Juan de Egaña, a Chilean statesman, published his influential "Project of a Declaration of Rights of the People of Chile" in 1810, calling for greater unity among nations in the Americas. Likewise, Simon Bolívar, eventual liberator of much of Latin America, advocated American solidarity and confederation among the people of the Western Hemisphere as they struggled and achieved independence. These ideas included mutual support in: gaining independence, defense, and forming "liberal, democratic, and constitutional government[s]." This did not mean cutting off all ties to Europe, but distinguished between the Old and New World and rejected any attempts by European states to subjugate them.

In light of the revolts in Spanish America, the U.S. Congress in 1811 established clearly its desire to both recognize the independence of these colonies and establish favorable trade agreements and access to ports.³⁷ Within a year of Colombia's declaration

of independence in 1810, the U.S. engaged in negotiations for a commerce treaty.³⁸ This began a pattern of formal recognition of the independence of former Spanish colonies. Colombia was of particular importance because of its control of Panama and the possibility of creating an inter-ocean canal. Thus, from the very first the U.S. had in mind advancement of commercial ties with Latin America, exports to which had grown to \$10 million by 1800.³⁹

Efforts to consolidate its independence from the Old World led the U.S. to declare its neutrality in the European wars. Preserving “neutral rights” would allow it to continue trading openly with the belligerents, while safeguarding its ships, men, and cargo. Europe heard these arguments for neutral rights and non-alignment with a tin ear.⁴⁰ This led to America’s “Quasi-War” with France from 1798 – 1800 over the seizure of U.S. ships.⁴¹ Nonetheless, the first decade of the nineteenth century represented a boon to U.S. trade, as America filled the void left by European merchants and shippers engulfed by the Napoleonic Wars. From 1790 to 1807, total U.S. exports grew from \$20 million to \$110 million while earnings from shipping grew from \$5 million to \$42 million.⁴² Domestically, the U.S. continued to struggle with establishing an internal market, in large part because the necessary infrastructure in the form of turnpikes, canals, and railways did not yet exist. This lack of infrastructure drastically increased the cost of transportation, inhibiting the flow of goods across the country.⁴³ Trade down the Mississippi into the port of New Orleans, which had doubled from 1802 to 1807, was still only \$5.3 million.⁴⁴ Shipping and re-export remained the principal drivers of the American economy during this period, and was enhanced by the contraband trade with the newly independent South American countries.⁴⁵

The benefits from trade expansion were unequally distributed across the U.S. Shipping had enriched the Northeast’s shipbuilders, merchants, and financiers.⁴⁶ This, combined with increased urbanization, led to the expansion of local markets for goods and services, as well as investments in the productivity of the local workforce through education.⁴⁷ In the South, agriculture remained the dominant economic activity, characterized by a small group of large plantation holders and a large group of subsistence farmers. Cotton became the principal export crop.⁴⁸ But unlike the North,

urbanization was not a significant factor in the South and thus local markets largely failed to develop. A major productive factor in the South was slave labor, which did not enjoy the same investments as the labor pool in the North. Instead, remittances from cotton exports flowed out of the South to purchase foodstuffs from the West and manufactured goods, services, and transport from the North via the coastal trades. The West, for its part, continued to export small excesses of foodstuffs while remaining largely subsistence based and excluded from the market economy for lack of infrastructure.

U.S. trade growth during this period was dramatically interrupted by the Embargo Act of 1807, Non-Intercourse Act of 1809, and War of 1812 between the U.S. and Britain. These actions were a direct response to continued European violations of neutral rights, as France and England sought to wreak havoc on each other through all means available. Both countries deliberately targeted U.S. ships, impressing sailors and confiscating cargo.⁴⁹ Consequently, exports fell back to their 1790 levels of just over \$20 million.⁵⁰ The precipitous drop in exports and shipping during the embargo period and war provided an impetus for the development of domestic manufacturing, financing, and consumer markets.⁵¹ American manufacturers also demonstrated an unusual willingness to incorporate machinery into their factories to offset the relatively high cost of labor, boosting productivity relative to Europe.⁵²

The interruption to commerce carried with it domestic implications for the U.S. as well, exacerbating internal divisions between those who viewed Europe as a market and those who saw it as a competitor. Despite these divisions, the war served as a catalyst for a resurgent U.S. nationalism. It strengthened ties between the states, stiffened political resolve against foreign interference, and created a strong undercurrent of anti-British sentiment.⁵³ The anger created by the War of 1812 would influence U.S. foreign policy decisions for years to come in the form of unilateralism and independence.

Exclusion from European markets during the war led to renewed interest in territorial expansion. The U.S. had long desired territories to the south and west, but disputes often arose over whether that expansion would come at the end of a pen or a sword. American statesmen such as Jefferson, Madison, and Adams viewed Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other islands of the Antilles as “natural appendages' to North America” and

strategically and commercially important to the U.S.⁵⁴ Attitudes toward the Floridas, which it claimed under the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 but which Spain contested, remained those of annexation.⁵⁵ West Florida's revolt from Spanish authority in 1810 led to U.S. occupation in 1811 to protect its people, property, and borders.⁵⁶ Additionally, West Florida provided access to the natural coastline of North America and the Mobile River, which was an important waterway for imports and exports to the Gulf.⁵⁷ In furtherance of U.S. occupation of West Florida, Congress passed laws prohibiting the transfer of either Florida to any other power. These laws were in harmony with long established American views on freeing the Western Hemisphere from what it viewed as the malign influence of European powers, but were unrecognized internationally.

Further south, the effective loss of Spanish control over its colonies in Latin America left an economic and political vacuum for Britain and the U.S. to fill.⁵⁸ This was both an opportunity and threat to the U.S. Although it ended Spain's ability to enforce mercantile trade policies, it also meant political leadership was needed to avoid Latin American alignment with European powers.⁵⁹ Should these new nations fall under the political influence of the Old World, they could threaten the internal unity and security of the U.S., forcing it to raise a standing army, increase unpopular taxes, and revise its system of loosely centralized government.

As America expanded, its new territories saw dramatic population increases from migrants and immigrants. In the 1810s, both the Great Lakes and southern Mississippi Valley regions tripled in population density.⁶⁰ Much of this growth and spread of settlers into western territories was unplanned and undirected by the federal government. Because these lands were not empty, it brought settlers into conflict with native tribes and led to government intervention that eventually resulted in further expansions at the expense of native peoples.⁶¹

The South benefited from its expansive lands in the Alabama and Mississippi territories, the populations of which would soon double. Further, it possessed a vast network of waterways that reduced the transportation costs of agricultural exports. The introduction of steam power in 1816 also dramatically lowered upstream shipping costs and increased imports.⁶² Moreover, Britain's appetite for cotton continued to grow, with U.S. suppliers comprising more than half of its total cotton imports. Nonetheless,

America's economy remained significantly fragmented in 1815, with a large portion of its people living subsistence lifestyles, particularly west of the Appalachian Mountains and Mississippi River.

1815 – 1823

During the late 1810s and early 1820s the U.S. position toward Latin America was mostly one of strict neutrality. It did not take sides in disputes, but did engage in trade with the independent countries as they emerged.⁶³ Adopting a neutral position with regard to Spanish America was done in part to advance its long-term goals. Namely, the acquisition of East and West Florida, which it had been negotiating with Spain over for some time. In 1818, for instance, the U.S. declined to recognize Argentine independence so as not to upset these negotiations.⁶⁴

Domestic opinions over involvement with Latin America were often split. In 1820 Senator Henry Clay from Kentucky advocated for an “American system,” conflating the “interests and ideals between the peoples of the Americas.”⁶⁵ This notion of fraternity with the former Spanish colonies was not simply shared ideals and values. It rested heavily on the economic opportunity Latin America represented for the U.S. In 1818 the U.S. imported \$16 million from, and exported \$15 million to, Latin America in the form of manufactures and food stuffs, representing over 10 percent of total U.S. trade.⁶⁶

Clay's support for political recognition of these inchoate countries was motivated by the commercial opportunities they presented in further consolidating American independence from the Old World. At the time, Britain represented America's largest foreign investor, its biggest supplier of imported finished goods, and its most significant export market for agricultural goods and raw materials.⁶⁷ This dependence on the British market was seen by many Americans as a vulnerability. Clay described the U.S. position in relation to Britain as “...politically free, economically slaves.”⁶⁸

Those in opposition to Clay's views questioned the capacity of the peoples of Latin America to govern themselves and join in any American system. These views were indicative of the racial and religious biases of the time, based largely on cultural

commonality between North Americans and Northern Europeans but disparity with Latin Americans. Secretary of State Adams' view of the American system was that "we have it; we constitute the whole of it; there is no community of interests or of principles between North and South America."⁶⁹ Adams further doubted the economic significance of Latin American markets. Nor did he want to drag America into a war with Europe that might endanger the internal unity of the nation.⁷⁰ In part, Adams' coolness towards greater economic integration with, and political recognition for, Latin America was the result of ongoing negotiations with Spain over the Floridas.⁷¹ This issue was not resolved until they were purchased through the settlement of the Transcontinental Treaty in 1819 and its ratification in 1821.⁷² By 1822, the U.S. had recognized Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru.⁷³ Adams' goal was a Latin America "governed by republican institutions, politically and commercially independent from Europe."⁷⁴

But a further complication was the relative political power of slave and non-slave states. Free access to the Mississippi after the Louisiana Purchase, and a surge of nationalism after the War of 1812, largely healed the old East-West divide that had threatened the security of the union in decades past. These forces brought into stark relief slavery as a fundamental contention between the North and South upon the admission of new territories.⁷⁵ When considering the admission of Missouri into the union in 1819, Northern politicians sought eventual emancipation of the state. This incensed Southern statesmen who felt it rang the death knell of their "peculiar institution" and threatened the economic lifeblood of their states.

As a consequence of this disagreement, the Missouri Compromise was enacted in 1820, allowing Missouri to enter as a slave state while Maine entered as a free state, establishing a careful political balance. Further, slavery was prohibited north of the 36th parallel.⁷⁶ The Missouri Compromise laid bare the vast divide between the North and South and dissuaded the U.S. from negotiating with Spain over Texas, despite its longstanding desire for the land. President Monroe wrote to Jefferson in 1820, "that the further acquisition of territory, to the West and South, involves difficulties of an internal nature which menace the Union itself."⁷⁷ This internal split deeply concerned Monroe when considering any future expansion.

European views on Latin America were dictated by the controlling monarchies, who still recognized Spanish ownership over Latin America and parts of the Caribbean. Nonetheless, Spain's weakness allowed both Britain and the U.S. to benefit from a vigorous contraband trade with the colonies.⁷⁸ With colonial access secured, they sought to preserve ineffectual Spanish control lest any other power attempt to seize them. Further, Britain had established as part of its foreign policy an opposition to any forceful intervention in Latin America by the Holy Alliance, made up of Russia, Austria, and Prussia.⁷⁹ To that end it secured, at the Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, agreements by the European powers to forswear aggression toward Spain's revolting colonies.⁸⁰ The British Navy was employed to ensure unmolested trade with Latin America, helping to entrench its position in the region. England's trade with Latin America in 1823 comprised 25 percent of its total trade with Europe and was equal to U.S. trade with the region.⁸¹

Notwithstanding the agreements made in 1818, the French invasion of Spain in April of 1823 and the establishment of Ferdinand VII on the Spanish throne, led to a resurgence in calls for forceful intervention in Latin America.⁸² Spain had long lobbied the Holy Alliance to restore its colonies to its control, which was in accordance with the Holy Alliance's Troppau Circular of 1820.⁸³ It asserted the right of the monarchies to intervene in Europe against any revolutionary movement which threatened its members' security.⁸⁴ This raised fears in the Americas and Britain that the former Spanish colonies might be targeted.⁸⁵ During the Congress of Verona that same year it seemed likely France would support this effort.⁸⁶ For its part, France saw this as an opportunity to gain favorable trade conditions with Spain's colonies as repayment for military support.⁸⁷ To counter these designs, British Foreign Minister George Canning began discussions in August with the U.S. minister to London, Richard Rush.⁸⁸

The Monroe Doctrine

Canning proposed a joint declaration with the U.S. opposing forceful intervention in Spanish America.⁸⁹ Rush agreed so long as Britain would immediately recognize the

independence of those colonies, which up to that point it had not done and to which Canning demurred.⁹⁰ Despite its recognition of the colonies in revolt, the U.S. sustained its policy of neutrality toward Spain, particularly out of concern for the disposition of Spain's possessions in the Caribbean.

While discussing the proposal with Canning, Rush also forwarded it to Secretary of State Adams. Adams brought the matter before President Monroe, whose cabinet discussed the issue for several months. One topic of concern was Russian expansion in the Pacific.⁹¹ Russia had claimed Alaska in the eighteenth century, and continued its descent down the western coast of North America toward Oregon and California. Secretary of State Adams feared Russia would avail itself of these territories through military occupation and monopolize access to the Pacific.⁹² This fear was based on the Czar's unilateral declaration (*ukase*) in 1821 that the Bering Sea was closed to all international commerce.⁹³

Another consideration was the political and diplomatic independence of the U.S. and its long-standing policy of forming "no entangling alliances".⁹⁴ Political independence was thus seen as an important source of diplomatic credibility and clout internationally. Domestically, lingering anti-British sentiment meant any overt collaboration with the British government would provide political rivals with opportunities to criticize Monroe's policies.⁹⁵ An additional complication with Canning's proposal was the inclusion of a statement renouncing any future territorial annexation of any former European colonies.⁹⁶ This conflicted with long-held views in America that Spanish territories would eventually, naturally gravitate toward the U.S. and were part of its "sphere of influence." Cuba was of particular interest because it lay only 90 miles off the U.S. coast and was a slave colony.⁹⁷ Southern states sought to balance out any accession of non-slave states with the acquisition of territories in which slavery was permitted, and the annexation of Cuba would support this political aim.⁹⁸ Further, with the purchases of the Louisiana Territories and the recent settlement of the Floridas, America cast an acquisitive view on Texas, the Caribbean, and the broader west.⁹⁹

Lastly, a fundamental economic issue was implicitly being debated with respect to relations with Britain. The political divisions between the North and South in the

1820s were driven not just by slavery but by underlying commercial differences and interests. The North was dominated by shippers, merchants, manufacturers, and financiers who saw Britain as their chief competitor. The South, on the other hand, produced agricultural commodities for export, the most important being cotton, which fed the British textile industry and comprised almost half of its cotton imports.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, southerners looked to Britain as an important export market and customer.¹⁰¹ These differing perspectives were apparent in the discussions of Canning's proposal and leading up to the issuance of Monroe's message to Congress in 1823. Southern cabinet members were in favor of a joint declaration that brought them in concert with Britain, but Northern ones were not.

In response to Canning's offer, Adams argued against a joint declaration. He preferred the diplomatic independence a U.S.-only declaration would provide and disdained the notion of appearing to follow in Britain's wake.¹⁰² Further, he held firmly to the long-standing policy of no entangling alliances as set forth by Washington, which a joint declaration could be seen to violate.¹⁰³ Moreover, he understood the economic opportunities further territorial expansion represented, and the need to appear domestically strong in light of anti-British sentiment.¹⁰⁴ Adams also sought greater economic independence from Britain and saw a unilateral declaration as working to support that aim. These arguments having prevailed, President Monroe wrote his annual message to Congress and in it he laid out what would later become his eponymous doctrine:

... At the proposal of the Russian Imperial Government...full power and instructions have been transmitted...to arrange by amicable negotiation the respective rights and interests of the two nations on the northwest coast of this continent....In the discussions to which this interest has given rise...the occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers...

...In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense. With the movements in this

hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected.... The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. ...and to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure,...this whole nation is devoted. We...declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintain it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States. In the war between those new Governments and Spain we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided no change shall occur which, in the judgment of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security.

The late events in Spain and Portugal show that Europe is still unsettled....Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars which have so long agitated that quarter of the globe, nevertheless remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers; to consider the government *de facto* as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm, and manly policy, meeting in all instances the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none. But in regard to those continents circumstances are eminently and conspicuously different.

It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either [American] continent without endangering our peace and happiness; nor can anyone believe that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference. If we look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new Governments, and their distance from each other, it must be obvious that she can never subdue them. It is still the true policy of the United States to leave the parties to themselves, in hope that other powers will pursue the same course....¹⁰⁵

Monroe's message to Congress addressed several issues. First, an agreement with Russia over the Pacific Northwest had been reached.¹⁰⁶ Second, the American continents

were not to be considered for future colonization by European powers. Third, the U.S. had a special interest in the Western Hemisphere and was devoted to the defense of its political system, which differed from Europe's. Fourth, any attempt to extend the European political system to the Western Hemisphere would be viewed as threatening. Fifth, the U.S. would not interfere with European internal matters or with any existing European colonies unless changing circumstances demanded it. Moreover, it would consider efforts to subdue those colonies as threatening. Lastly, the U.S. was neutral in the matter of Spain's disputes with its colonies but saw no possibility of Spain reasserting control.

Meanwhile, the British position with respect to Latin America in the early 1820s was complicated by three factors. First, Canning needed to curtail France's designs on the Spanish colonies. Second, Russian incursions down the west coast of North America needed to be blunted. And third, the diplomatic position with Spain and normalization of political ties with the colonies needed resolution.¹⁰⁷ Monroe's message announcing an agreement with Russia successfully halted Russian advancements in the Pacific Northwest. Canning secured French agreement to stay out of Latin America through negotiations with Prince Polignac in October of 1823, more than a month before Monroe's message to Congress.¹⁰⁸ Time ultimately resolved his diplomatic difficulties with Spain, whose power continued to wane.

Despite its seemingly aggressive stance on European interference in the Western Hemisphere and proximity to South America, U.S. predominance was no certainty in 1823. At the time, its population numbered a mere 10 million and it enjoyed exclusive control of only 600,000 square miles of land, with no access to the Pacific.¹⁰⁹ Nor was its military power comparable with that of European nations, although it was superior to the nations of Latin America.¹¹⁰ The U.S. was largely agrarian, but a growing middle class of entrepreneurs and merchants were pushing U.S. commercial interests toward center stage in American foreign policy.¹¹¹

1824 – 1848

England received Monroe's principles with "great enthusiasm" as a corollary to its own policies toward Spanish America.¹¹² It comported with desires to keep open the Spanish American markets, which Britain had long dominated. Together with its own agreement, Monroe's principles stanching Russian pretensions toward expansion on the west coast of North America.¹¹³ Nonetheless, Canning was politically embarrassed because it gave the appearance that the U.S. had preempted him in securing Latin American commerce.¹¹⁴ He subsequently published the Canning-Polignac memorandum, which showed he had prevented European interference months before Monroe's message was issued. In 1824 Britain recognized the independence of the Latin American countries.¹¹⁵ During Canning's negotiations with Latin American states, he pressed for free trade, secure in the knowledge that no other country could compete with British manufacturers.¹¹⁶

The rest of Europe had mixed responses to Monroe's message. The French accepted the message because it was in agreement with their pledge to Canning not to intervene in support of Spain.¹¹⁷ Nonetheless, they remained concerned over British recognition of the Spanish colonies, which they felt would weaken the recently reestablished Spanish monarchy and the overall legitimacy of monarchism, which they sought to strengthen. Russia remained largely disinterested as it had concluded agreements with the U.S. and Britain over the borders of the inhospitable Alaskan territory. Spain, on the other hand, was displeased with Monroe's assessment that its colonies were forever lost and "protested strongly."¹¹⁸

In an effort to reduce conflict with England over trade in Spanish America, King Ferdinand VII issued a decree in 1824 allowing colonial trade under the same conditions as those in its European territories.¹¹⁹ This decree had little effect as both the U.S. and Britain had recognized and engaged in free commerce with the colonies despite opposition from Spain. In the words of the *Times* of London, "Spain was permitting that which it could not impede."

In Latin America, Monroe's message struck a chord. Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico all accepted its principles and attempted to formalize what they interpreted to be an implicit commitment to mutual support. It had long been the desire of Colombian president Simon Bolivar to unite the former Spanish colonies in a confederation of political arbitration and mutual defense. The Latin American states saw a particular solidarity and fraternity between them which made their interrelations distinct from those of Europe.¹²⁰ It was therefore hoped that Monroe's message was the beginning of greater pan-Americanism.¹²¹

Spanish Americans had echoed the ideas expressed by Monroe with regard to a new political system in the West defined by liberal, democratic, and constitutional institutions. They also rejected any interference or attempts at subjugation by European powers, as well as the balance-of-power politics which ceaselessly brought European powers into conflict. However, the U.S. did not share Latin America's desire for military and political closeness.¹²²

Americans held onto their long-standing policy of no entangling alliances, and feared any agreements which might draw them into a protectorate role over Latin America.¹²³ In 1824, Colombia proposed a defense alliance with the U.S. but was ignored. That same year Brazil sought a defense treaty with the U.S. against its former imperial master Portugal, but the U.S. demurred. Again in 1825, Brazil was rebuffed and in 1826 the U.S. explicitly denied entering into any mutual defense alliance with Mexico in relation to Monroe's principles. In 1828, in response to the war between Brazil and Argentina over Uruguay, the U.S. stated its prerogative in determining when Monroe's principles could be invoked and that any invocation would require the approval of Congress. Thus, it refrained from getting involved.¹²⁴ Monroe's message had stated U.S. recognition for those former Spanish colonies whose "Governments...have declared their independence and maintain it." America's stance was that the independent nations of Latin America were responsible for their own sovereignty.¹²⁵ Throughout the century the U.S. would continue to reject any assertion that it had an obligation to act militarily in defense of these nations.¹²⁶

America's refusals to enter into treaties of mutual defense with Latin American countries against European powers was a primary source of their eventual disenchantment over the Monroe Doctrine. Thus, the hope and optimism that accompanied the promulgation of Monroe's principles soon dissipated.¹²⁷ In the view of Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, it was the English who had contributed much more to the consolidation, legitimacy, and security of these newly independent countries, rather than the U.S.¹²⁸

By 1825, it was clear that the U.S. saw in Monroe's principles the obligation for each country in the Americas to maintain its own sovereignty against any European threat. President Adams' instructions to his delegates attending the Congress of Panama in 1826 entailed exactly this. Further, the prerogative of the U.S. to take action in the event of European interference remained just that, and not an automatic, binding agreement.¹²⁹ Moreover, the U.S. position toward Cuba and Puerto Rico was that it was satisfied with Spanish rule of the islands, fearing that independence would jeopardize existing commercial access to the islands.¹³⁰ Instead, the U.S. sought agreement on the construction of a canal in Central America and to secure its freedom of trade and navigation.¹³¹ This was in contravention to Bolivar's aim in calling the conference.¹³² Regardless, the treaty produced by the conference failed to be ratified except in Colombia. Subsequent conferences either failed to materialize or were equally ineffectual.

The U.S. position toward Cuba, a strategically important island, was long established and unrest in 1825 was cause for the use of Monroe's principles.¹³³ From the U.S. perspective, Cuba was central to controlling commerce in the gulf, had long been viewed as naturally within the America's orbit, and was of such strategic importance that the U.S. would consider going to war to prevent it falling into the hands of another European power.¹³⁴ Britain largely shared this view as Havana was an important port for trade in the Caribbean. It, like the U.S., wanted the island to remain in the ineffectual hands of the Spanish rather than be transferred or conquered by another power, who might impose mercantile trade restrictions.¹³⁵ Moreover, neither country supported Cuban independence. Spain accommodated these views, made efforts to quell the unrest, and retained the island.

American opposition to Cuban independence or annexation also stemmed from a fear of inflaming internal divisions at home over slavery and inciting the rancor that had accompanied the Missouri Compromise.¹³⁶ In the first place, America was not confident Cuba was capable of self-governance. Moreover, should a slave revolt arise on the island, it was feared it could spread to the U.S., forcing draconian and divisive legal measures to protect Southern interests. Instead, U.S. insistence on continued Spanish control would be seen as implicit in Monroe's message and become known as the "no-transfer principle."¹³⁷

Ultimately, America's internal disputes over the meaning of "pan-Americanism" and disparate views on slavery, expansionism, and the distribution of power among the branches of government grew. The end of Monroe's presidency also brought to an end the "era of good feelings" in U.S. domestic politics, a period seen as largely nonpartisan.¹³⁸ What followed was the era of two-party politics in which the agriculturally oriented, pro-expansionist Democrats found themselves at odds with the Whigs, who supported congressional authority, protection of capital and domestic industry, and social reform.

A New Era

U.S. foreign policy softened toward Britain with the transition from President Adams to President Andrew Jackson in 1829. Adams, a Massachusetts proponent of the "American system", largely rejected cooperation and compromise with the English. Jackson, a Tennessee Democrat who supported agricultural export and national expansion, found retaining access to British markets and financiers worth compromise.¹³⁹ The South in particular relied heavily on British finance, and by 1838 Britain held half the bonds issued to Southern plantations.¹⁴⁰ Subsequent Democrat presidents would likewise take a tolerant view toward England.

The 1830s represented a growth period in the American economy. The value of U.S. exports grew from a peak of \$87 million in 1817 to \$125 million in 1836, with cotton accounting for over half.¹⁴¹ Imports had grown from \$101 million to \$180 million

and immigration had risen to an average of 57,000 people a year, mostly from the United Kingdom.¹⁴² Indeed, nearly 70 percent of the immigrants from the U.K. were heading to America rather than other places within the empire.¹⁴³ This influx of people supplied a work force to cultivate sparsely populated areas and boosted demand for European finished and semi-finished goods.¹⁴⁴

Monroe's principles did not go uncontested in the 1830s and 1840s however.¹⁴⁵ In 1833, President Jackson failed to intervene in the English conquest of the Falkland Islands at the expense of Argentina.¹⁴⁶ Nor did he support Guatemala in its disputes with the British over Belize in 1835.¹⁴⁷ The U.S. also refrained from intervening against France in 1838 and France and England in 1845, who participated in the disputes between Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay.¹⁴⁸ British gunboat diplomacy in the Rio de la Plata dispute between Uruguay and Argentina in 1843 also went uncontested.¹⁴⁹ These incidents made clear, especially to Latin Americans, that it remained the prerogative of the U.S. to interpret Monroe's principles as its interests demanded.

Expansion continued under America's next few presidents, who used what would soon become known as the Monroe Doctrine to legitimate their actions. For example, in 1844 France asked the U.S. to agree not to annex Texas, which had declared its independence from Mexico in 1836.¹⁵⁰ Pro-slavery and Manifest Destiny supporter President John Tyler refused, citing concerns over ties between Britain, who outlawed slavery in 1833, and Texas.¹⁵¹ The threat of a Texas becoming a free state and aligning with a European power was reason to preserve the option of annexation.¹⁵²

In 1845, pro-slavery President James Polk embraced the notion of preemptive westward expansion on the grounds of national security, despite Mexico's ownership of most of that territory. It was in this light that he created "Monroe's Doctrine," transforming Monroe's principles into a "proactive call for territorial expansion."¹⁵³ In his address to Congress that year Polk declared that the U.S. had "not sought to extend out territorial possessions by conquest." But he reserved "the right of 'the nations of America...to make war [and] to conclude peace....'" His desires for the western territories, and his efforts immediately before the Mexican-American War to purchase them, spoke clearly to his ambitions for the U.S. To Polk, it was a race to create a transcontinental nation against the malign forces of Europe. He played on fears of foreign

intervention to gain domestic support for a predatory foreign policy, with access to the Pacific in mind.

The U.S. annexed Texas as a slave state in 1845, diminishing calls for abolition within the state and strengthening the pro-slavery caucus in Congress. Secretary of State John C. Calhoun couched annexation as an affirmation of slavery.¹⁵⁴ He believed “‘this Government, upon all occasions ought to give encouragement and countenance, as far as it can with safety, to the ascendancy of the white race.’”¹⁵⁵ Following the admission of Texas, Polk began negotiations with Mexico over the Mexico-Texas border and attempted to purchase California.¹⁵⁶ Upon Mexico's refusal, he sent the U.S. Army to the disputed border, where a military skirmish served as the pretext for a declaration of war.¹⁵⁷ The Mexican-American War of 1846 resulted in the transfer of almost half of Mexico to the U.S. under the Guadalupe-Hidalgo Treaty in 1848 for a payment of \$15 million.¹⁵⁸ Polk's preemptive annexation of territory to secure America's transcontinental claim and prevent European colonization, and his willingness to start a war to do so, established what would become known as the Polk Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

In 1847, Polk attempted to gain control of harbors in Haiti as important strategic military and commercial ports.¹⁵⁹ In 1848, he advocated for intervention in the Yucatan Peninsula to avoid it falling under the influence of Britain or Spain.¹⁶⁰ Polk characterized the conflict in the Yucatan as “‘‘savage’ Indians...’waging a war of extermination against the white race.’” Ultimately, Polk's urgings failed to spur any action, but it provided an important nuance to the Polk Corollary. Namely, justifying intervention in the domestic affairs of another country to preempt such an intervention by a European power.

Nonetheless, the Mexican-American War dashed what little hope remained of incorporating the U.S. into a Latin American defense alliance. Despite largely accepting the changes to Monroe's doctrine, the war gave impetus to the Continental Treaty of 1856 among Chile, Peru, and Ecuador, which sought to protect themselves from American aggression.¹⁶¹ The image of the U.S. as an American defender was transforming into that of a conqueror.¹⁶²

American expansion in the 1840s brought with it the potential for conflict with Britain because its Canadian colony had several unresolved border disputes with the U.S. Prime Minister Robert Peel was generally conciliatory toward the U.S., recognizing its

importance as Britain's chief trading partner and not wanting to jeopardize that relationship over “barren lands in North America.”¹⁶³ Britain thus refrained from challenging America in its annexation of Texas in 1845, preferring to maintain good relations in view of British interests in California and along the Great Lakes. Of consequence, it was also given favorable terms by President Polk during the Oregon Treaty negotiations of 1846.

1849 – 1904

The economic and military growth of the U.S. in the 1840s and 1850s changed its relationship with the powers of Europe. Each side deliberately avoided antagonistic policies toward the other, and supported policies which fostered commerce and investment.¹⁶⁴ To that end, the U.S. and Britain cooperated for their mutual commercial benefit in 1850 by establishing the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. Negotiated during the presidencies of Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore, both Whigs, the treaty aimed to advance economic and security interests through international cooperation. It sought to establish and jointly control an inter-oceanic canal in Central America.¹⁶⁵ Although mutually agreeable, the treaty would later be characterized as a violation of Monroe's doctrine, as it allowed a European power to “colonize” territory in the Western Hemisphere.¹⁶⁶ In fact, Secretary of State John Clayton explicitly disavowed the doctrine during the negotiations, which proved to be a material factor in Britain accepting. A second violation of the doctrine by the administration, also in 1850, involved joint mediation among France, England, and the U.S. in bringing the civil war in Haiti to an end.¹⁶⁷ In this instance, France and England were interfering in the internal affairs of an independent state in the Americas, once again demonstrating the variability in the application of Monroe's doctrine.

Alongside the American Civil War in the 1860s was ongoing civil unrest in Mexico. Liberal and conservative forces battled for control of the Mexican government and the future of the country.¹⁶⁸ In 1861, Mexico suspended loan repayments to its European creditors and British, French, and Spanish warships arrived in Veracruz to

enforce the loan terms.¹⁶⁹ After terms had been reached, the French forces failed to withdraw, and instead set out to establish monarchical rule in Mexico. In 1863, French forces captured Mexico City and established Austrian archduke Maximilian as the emperor of Mexico.¹⁷⁰

French occupation of Mexico City in 1863 caused cheers of support from the Confederacy and howls of outrage from the Union.¹⁷¹ The North saw it as directly related to the secessionist cause and an “act of war against the United States.”¹⁷² Thus the Union was faced with simultaneous threats of disunion and foreign intervention in North America, once again intertwining foreign and domestic policy. In this instance the U.S. adhered to the principles of the Monroe Doctrine. In 1860, it refused to cooperate with France, Spain, and England to pressure the Mexican government for repayment or to choose sides in the internal power struggle in the country.¹⁷³ This allowed it to preserve its cherished unilateralism in foreign affairs. It also refused to participate in landing warships in 1861 to force the Mexican government to respect the property rights of Europeans in the country.¹⁷⁴ Although it did not respond with force, because it was in the midst of its own civil war, the U.S. firmly and immediately rejected France's invasion and the establishment of Emperor Maximilian.¹⁷⁵ It further reiterated Monroe's doctrine in that the people of the Western Hemisphere should be left to choose their own form of representative government.

Under President Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. would continue its tepid relations with southern neighbors and its selective adherence to the Monroe Doctrine. In 1862 Lincoln rejected Latin American invitations to attend the Conference of Lima.¹⁷⁶ He did so on the grounds that it might antagonize the Europeans, once again showing the U.S. relationship with Europe to be far more important to that of Latin America.¹⁷⁷ Further, he demonstrated a willingness to work alongside European powers to secure U.S. interests. In 1862, the U.S. sought French and English support in securing commerce in Central America during unrest in Panama.¹⁷⁸ That same year, the British declaration of a colony in modern day Belize elicited little interest.¹⁷⁹ Domestically, Democrats and Republicans alike invoked the doctrine in opposition to French control of Mexico and to attack President Lincoln's prosecution of the war and foreign policy.¹⁸⁰ These cases help

demonstrate that the U.S. saw the Monroe Doctrine as a strictly American prerogative. Moreover, it encapsulated a set of principles to be interpreted and employed based on the prevailing circumstances and as U.S. interests of the day dictated. After the war, the U.S. took a more aggressive position against the French occupation of Mexico in the name of the Monroe Doctrine. France, for its part, was losing ground to the liberals in Mexico and withdrew in 1867.

The expansionary tendencies displayed in the 1840s had not ceased to energize American statesmen, however. In 1870, President Ulysses S. Grant called for the annexation of the Dominican Republic, mainly because it could serve an important strategic role in guarding the entry to an inter-oceanic canal in Central America.¹⁸¹ Using the Monroe Doctrine as justification, Grant called for this annexation as a preemptive “measure of national protection” to prevent a European power from seizing the island, and used France's recent invasion of Mexico as an example of continued European hostility toward America.¹⁸² The Senate refused to pass the annexation treaty, but it would establish a pattern for future invocations of the Monroe Doctrine to validate arguments for almost any foreign policy.

American statesmen also continued to demonstrate interest in Latin America after the war for economic and security reasons. The creation of a canal in Central America had been part of negotiations between the U.S. and Colombia since the first treaty in 1824. Further, Cuban instability under Spanish rule continued to be seen as a threat to U.S. shipping.¹⁸³ Moreover, economic and political instability had plagued the region, threatening European financial interests and evoking interventions to secure property or loan repayments.

U.S. economic and security interests dominated its relations with Latin America. However, in virtually every case the U.S. continued to weigh European—particularly British—interests over Latin American ones. Its cultural and economic ties with Europe, combined with prevailing racial attitudes, meant U.S. interposition was more likely to benefit Europe than Latin America. True to form, the U.S. would choose to adhere to or ignore the Monroe Doctrine as it deemed necessary in furtherance of its objectives. In 1875, in violation of the principle of European nonintervention, the U.S. suggested a

collective response with European nations to end the Cuban insurrection.¹⁸⁴ In 1877, in violation of the no transfer principle, it ignored the transfer of the Island of St. Bartholomew from Sweden to France. In these instances, the U.S. determined its interests were better served by ignoring the precedents established by previous administrations in the name of the Monroe Doctrine.

Of course, the doctrine continued to be useful in rallying domestic support for foreign expansionist and interventionist policies. The establishment of a Central American canal is a case in point. U.S. acquisition of former Mexican territories to the west coast in 1848 made the importance of an inter-ocean canal through either Mexico or Central America significantly greater.¹⁸⁵ As with the Panama Congress of 1826, the U.S. pressed to have the agenda for the Pan-American Congress of 1881 include discussion of an inter-oceanic canal.¹⁸⁶ The population of South America was estimated to be 40 million, a sizable market for America's increasingly powerful and competitive manufacturers. Trade with South American in 1880 had also grown to over \$103 million. Perhaps more importantly, however, was the opportunities a canal would create for Pacific trade.

Indeed, America marshaled many of the same sentiments used by the Victorians. Senator Albert Beveridge, in light of the annexation of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War said it was “the mission of our race, trustee under God, for the civilisation of the world.”¹⁸⁷ Spreading civilization was deeply rooted in the themes of expansion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The wane of its influence was seen in the fall of U.S. dependence on British lending, which tended to decrease from the 1870s onward.¹⁸⁸ Likewise, world dependence on British iron production began to decline as industrializing nations expanded domestic capacity. Production in cotton textiles saw a similar relative decline to other nations, boosted by trade barriers erected to protect domestic industry.¹⁸⁹ Britain experienced an over-investment in industrial capacity which lowered returns and prices while increasing output. This darkening outlook caused reflection on Britain's position in the Western Hemisphere. The region began to seem ripe for America, the rising global power, to bear the mantle of “the thankless 'White Man's Burden.’”¹⁹⁰ American world hegemony had long been predicted and seemed now to be

coming to fruition.¹⁹¹ Accompanying that hegemony would be the burdens of ensuring regional economic and political stability.

To this end, the U.S. hosted an international conference in 1889 to discuss trade in the Western Hemisphere.¹⁹² The agenda focused on mechanisms to ease the flow of commerce within the Americas, raise trade barriers to Europe, and stabilize the region. America had hoped to secure agreements which would allow it to establish its economic dominance and crowd out European commerce. It was clear to the Latin American countries in attendance that, contrary to the goals of previous Pan-American conferences, which sought strong political and defensive ties, the U.S. had only its economic security in mind. The governments of Latin America proved unsympathetic to these efforts to establish U.S. economic hegemony over the Western Hemisphere at the expense of Europe.¹⁹³

The Monroe Doctrine continued to serve domestic political purposes as well. Economic hardship in 1893 had brought a surge of Republicans, and their expansionist and interventionist proclivities, into Congress in the midterm elections. President Grover Cleveland's reversals of expansionist foreign policies had drawn criticism from within his own Democratic party as well as from Republicans.¹⁹⁴ The dispute between Britain and Venezuela over British Guiana seemed the perfect opportunity to criticize the president for failing to uphold the Monroe Doctrine and of being weak on national security. In 1895 Cleveland became adamant that Britain submit its border dispute with Venezuela to arbitration.¹⁹⁵ This was largely out of character for a president who considered the Monroe Doctrine "troublesome." Cleveland's argument for insisting on arbitration rested on the distinctions between the Old and New World political systems and the right to self-determination, but also on the growing power of the U.S. In Secretary of State Richard Olney's words "today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent and its fiat is law."¹⁹⁶

Cleveland's intervention rested on concerns over U.S. security. European powers had for some time been expanding their militaries and would, he feared, turn their efforts toward the Western Hemisphere. Trouble in Brazil, Cuba, and greater immigration from Europe to South America might serve as ample pretext for European intervention, which

would threaten U.S. hegemony and national security.¹⁹⁷ To defend itself, the U.S. might be forced to change dramatically the conditions which had thus far allowed it to pursue uninhibited commercial expansion. It would require raising taxes to build up militarily, “convert[ing] the flower of our male population into soldiers and sailors.”¹⁹⁸ New laws and new powers for the central government would be needed to ensure an adequate mobilization of the means necessary to counter any potential rival. The largely benign conditions to which the U.S. had been subjected for most of the nineteenth century would be dramatically changed, and the country would need to change accordingly. Demanding that Britain submit to arbitration was Cleveland's way of stemming the threat of growing European influence in the Americas and allowing the U.S. to resume its role as a largely neglectful regional hegemon.

The British response to Olney's message was to refuse to submit to U.S. threats or to recognize the Monroe Doctrine as part of international law.¹⁹⁹ After Cleveland's forceful response and threat that the U.S. would settle the disputed boundary itself, the British eventually submitted to arbitration.²⁰⁰ With its commercial interests and those of its nationals secure, there was little risk of escalation between the U.S. and Britain over the issue. Further, the British hoped this assertiveness would lead the U.S. to take a more active role in maintaining stability in Latin America. During the arbitration, Olney did not discuss his plans with Venezuela despite its concern over Venezuelan territory and made key concessions which the British had sought but which the Venezuelans had rejected.²⁰¹ In essence, this episode transformed the Monroe Doctrine once again, this time into a doctrine of U.S. sovereignty over the whole of North America without the obligation of protection, but with veto power over European actions.

The Spanish-American War of 1898, which started over the chronically unstable Cuba, was one of the few times in the nineteenth century during which the discussion of the Monroe Doctrine was muted.²⁰² This owed partly to its successful use by Cleveland, a Democrat, against Britain in 1895, making Republicans reluctant to invoke it. For others the Monroe Doctrine seemed out of concert with their hopes of acquiring Spain's Pacific territories.²⁰³ Instead, the anti-imperialist camp seized on the Monroe Doctrine to decry the expansionist designs of the Spanish-American War.²⁰⁴ Future president Theodore Roosevelt held the opposite view, seeing American expansion as a continuation of

Manifest Destiny toward becoming a great colonial power. The Treaty of Paris that same year at the conclusion of the war ceded ownership of Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines and occupation of Cuba to the U.S. During this period the U.S. also elected to annex Hawaii over similar concerns of trade and security in the Pacific, justified through the Monroe Doctrine.²⁰⁵

Although the U.S. had long considered Cuba strategically important, there was an economic component to U.S. intervention in 1898. By 1896 the U.S. had \$30 million to \$50 million in agricultural, commodity, and transport investments in the island.²⁰⁶ Trade in 1894 was \$96 million. Thus, one of America's stated justifications for the intervention was the protection of its nationals' commercial and property interests. These same U.S. nationals had mobilized political support and lashed themselves to American security interests. Moreover, fears on both sides of the political divide in the years after 1898 about the status and stability of Cuba led to the Platt Amendment of 1901.²⁰⁷ It restricted Cuban sovereignty, fiscal policy, and ceded Guantanamo Bay to the U.S. without formally annexing the island. The Platt Amendment established Cuba as an American protectorate and created a control mechanism over Cuban independence in which the U.S. could ensure its commercial and security interests were protected, couching these actions in the language of the Monroe Doctrine.²⁰⁸

In 1900, the U.S. was also able to make good on its 1880 position that a canal through Central America would be under its sole control.²⁰⁹ Using the Monroe Doctrine's principles as a guide, the U.S. pressured Britain into signing the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, thereby annulling the 1850 Clayton-Bulwer Treaty with its provision for joint control of any cross-isthmus canal. The U.S. would thus have sole control over any canal, but agreed to preserve access in peace and war to all nations.²¹⁰

President Roosevelt viewed the Monroe Doctrine through an interventionist lens. In 1900, as president-elect, he declared the right of the U.S. to wrest control of the Panama Canal from Colombia if necessary to secure the interests of American commerce.²¹¹ In some respects, this represented a continuity of thought and policy since 1824 with respect to securing access to any canal crossing the Central American isthmus. To that end, in 1903 the U.S. sought to purchase from Colombia a 100-year

lease for the territory in Panama in order to complete the canal. The price was a \$10 million initial payment and \$250,000 per year.²¹² Thus the U.S. and Colombia signed the Hay-Herran Treaty giving America the rights to the canal project.²¹³ In August the Colombian parliament refused to ratify the treaty, and a few months later Panama revolted. Within 24 hours, the gunboat USS *Nashville* intervened to stop Colombian forces from landing and the U.S. had recognized Panama.²¹⁴ Two weeks later, the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty was signed, securing to the U.S. the land surrounding the canal, sole control of its operation, and an explicit right to intervene to protect it.²¹⁵ Roosevelt's rationale for intervening was dressed in the language of the Monroe Doctrine, and he believed it was for the benefit of world commerce.

In 1904, Roosevelt established his own corollary to the Monroe Doctrine as a response to debt repayment issues in the Dominican Republic. He asserted American authority to intervene in the Western Hemisphere to ensure repayment of debts owed to European powers on the grounds that otherwise they would intervene militarily and threaten U.S. security.²¹⁶ He called this type of action “an international police power...in flagrant cases of...wrong-doing.”²¹⁷

Reaction to the Roosevelt Corollary in Europe was muted. This was largely because it ensured some sort of arbitration and economic control to secure the financial interests of foreign powers without those powers having to resort to force. America had proven sympathetic to European claims in the case of the Dominican Republic and thus was likely to treat “civilized” nations equitably.²¹⁸ As a result, Britain withdrew large naval units from the Atlantic in the early 1900s. It based these withdrawals on the premise that the Roosevelt Corollary would provide for the financial security of its commercial interests.²¹⁹

Latin American opinion toward the Monroe Doctrine during the 1900s was mixed, particularly after Roosevelt's interventions in Cuba, Panama, and the Dominican Republic.²²⁰ Mexico, the Caribbean states, and Central American considered the U.S. a threat to their sovereignty and political stability. However, the views of those states with more well-established economies and political relations were more closely aligned with the U.S. Argentina is one such case, where economic development and racial views

evolved to mirror those of the U.S. Roosevelt's view toward Latin America was similarly mixed. He saw Argentina, Brazil, and Chile as among the "civilized" nations of the world, but much of the rest of Latin America as uncivilized and in need of leadership from the U.S.²²¹

Interpretation

America pursued an independent foreign policy during the nineteenth century, focusing on trade and opposition to monarchic forms of government. After two wars with Britain, and feeling surrounded by hostile colonies since its inception, the U.S. acquired territories which provided it essential farmland and access to waterways. America sought neutrality in order to focus on internal consolidation and economic development. Toward that end, the Monroe Doctrine, as it became known, helped shape foreign policy for the subsequent 100 years. It articulated America's desires for appropriate conduct in the Western Hemisphere, and drew important distinctions between the Old and New World.

Nonetheless, European powers remained a constant presence in the Americas, and competed with the U.S. for trade and influence throughout the nineteenth century. Chief among them was Britain, unsurpassed in the world in military and economic might. The products from British industry were generally superior to America's, and gained prominence in much of the Western Hemisphere. British industrial might also often had the effect of preventing indigenous industrial development in Latin American countries, whose industries were much less developed.

At the same time, America's longstanding commercial relationships and shared legal framework with Britain supported the efficient conduct of private enterprise, the development of the domestic market, and westward expansion. Arguments that American trade flourished without a significant navy ignored the pacifying effect of the Royal Navy on Latin America, of which America was a beneficiary.²²² Further, the presence of British ships likely prevented interference by other European powers during the Latin American wars of independence.

Feelings in Latin America toward the U.S. were mixed throughout the nineteenth century. Before the Monroe Doctrine, the lack of support by the U.S. for Spanish colonial revolutions, which Britain did support, meant the newly independent countries tended to lean more strongly toward the British.²²³ This situation was exacerbated by U.S. insistence on neutrality in disputes between Spain and the revolting colonies. At the same time, the U.S. recognized the independence of these colonies several years before Britain, and for that reason was accorded some favor. Nonetheless, recognition on the part of the U.S. was principally driven by economic concerns and competition with Britain for Latin American trade.²²⁴

The fear of foreign intervention remained an important and potent force in mobilizing domestic support for aggressive foreign policies and domestic consolidation.²²⁵ The Monroe Doctrine was often used internally as a nationalistic political weapon, leading to competitions between parties in burnishing their Monrovia credentials.²²⁶ At the same time, Americans frequently expressed ambivalence about the use of the Monroe Doctrine to justify westward expansion.²²⁷ In the latter part of the nineteenth century they often consoled themselves by acknowledging the brevity of these enterprises and blaming them on the pro-slavery politics of the 1830s and 1840s.

This apologetic view changed around the turn of the twentieth century as intervention came to be seen as the obligation of regional hegemony, particularly with relation to the Caribbean and the new territories gained after the Spanish-American War of 1898.²²⁸ The debates surrounding the Monroe Doctrine during and after the Spanish-American War brought with them new conceptions of how and when the doctrine applied. The traditional unilateral, self-interested, and anti-European elements were joined with an expansionist, hegemonic paternalism espousing the obligations of a “civilized” nation toward the uncivilized races of Latin America and the Pacific.²²⁹ Roosevelt, in particular, viewed the doctrine as a mechanism to advance “the interests of Western civilization.”²³⁰

What started out as Monroe's message of principles morphed into a doctrine of “imperial anticolonialism.”²³¹ It attached to itself various prerogatives in the Western Hemisphere. For instance, America promulgated the “no transfer” rule, whereby no

colony or territory could transfer from one European state to another.²³² The U.S. also opposed European powers using colonial revenues as collateral for loans. Further, it reserved the right to intervene in support of colonial revolts and then enact treaties which gave it virtual sovereignty over those territories, as was the case in Cuba, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. The U.S. also reserved the right as a third party to interpose itself into border disputes, as it did in the dispute between Venezuela and Britain. Moreover, it had the right to intervene to secure the financial interests of European countries on the premise that Latin American default encouraged European intervention which threatened U.S. security interests.²³³ In every instance mentioned, the U.S. acted for its own interests, expressly rejecting any obligation to act in mutual defense of the democratic republics of the New World.

Throughout the nineteenth century U.S. international relationships were influenced by the principles articulated by President Monroe in 1823. Those principles had long been held by American statesmen, and became a source of national pride. As the U.S. grew, its generally neutral stance became more assertive. By the end of the century, it had grown dramatically in both economic and territorial size and sought to shape events in the Western Hemisphere. The early twentieth century would see a continuation of this tendency, and ultimately the rise of the U.S. as a global superpower by mid-century.

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Chapter 2

Chinese Foreign Policy (1949 – 2016)

The twentieth century was a volatile time for the global economy, politics, and societies. It saw two world wars, the rise of communism, the advent of nuclear weapons, the first existential threat to civilization, more than forty years of Cold War, the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union, the ascendance of America as the lone super power, globalization, and the creation of the Internet.

China's development during this time was no less tumultuous. In the early twentieth century the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek sought to end warlordism and bring order to China's vast landscape through the establishment of a central government. At the same time, a young communist named Mao Tse-tung became part of a nascent Communist Party of China (CPC), which sought to bring about a socialist revolution in the world's most populous country. After experiencing major setbacks at the hands of the Nationalists, the CPC and People's Liberation Army (PLA) eventually succeeded in gaining control and establishing the PRC in 1949.

Geopolitics during this period were bifurcated into a bipolar competition between Soviet-style communism and central planning on the one hand and democracy and market capitalism on the other. The end of World War II (WWII) brought America and the Soviet Union in direct competition, both for military and economic control over Europe and ideological supremacy across the globe. The devastation wrought by the war left many of the economies of Europe and Asia shattered, and the U.S. reaped much of the benefit. Nonetheless, America's nuclear monopoly was short-lived and gave way to the threat of mutually assured destruction from the Soviets. China and other nations in Asia and Europe also acquired nuclear arsenals, increasing the potential for regional conflict to end in global nuclear conflagration.

China's foreign and domestic policies in the early years of the PRC proved equally turbulent. Mao's foreign policy reaction to U.S. efforts to politically isolate China was to lean toward the Soviets and what he called the third world. Domestically,

he sought to launch China on a path of economic, industrial, and agricultural self-sufficiency and later to wipe away all vestiges of traditional Chinese society and culture. Rather than usher in a new period of Chinese prosperity and socialist purity, Mao's initiatives crippled China's economy and tore apart Chinese society. At the end of his life, and partly as a result of falling out with the Soviets, Mao began the process of unfreezing relations with the West in general and America in particular.

Deng Xiaoping, Mao's eventual successor in 1978, moved dramatically along this path, opening China to the world and sidelining Marxist ideologues in favor of pragmatic economic reformers. This trend toward economic modernization was briefly interrupted by social unrest and the fall of the Soviet Union, but quickly resumed unabated. China's foreign policy under Deng was markedly different than that of Mao. Deng's focus continued to be on economic development and participation in multilateral institutions, and China espoused peaceful development and good relations with its neighbors. It looked to minimize the impact of ongoing territorial disputes, both along its extensive land borders and over islands in the East and South China Seas. Instead, it sought to erect the scaffolding of economic growth on the foundation of its ideological relations with other developing nations. Truly, all considerations were subordinated to the preservation of CPC political control and China's economic development, and those conflicts that did occur were conducted with restraint.

The 1990s and 2000s largely represented a continuity in China's foreign and domestic policy, emphasizing economic growth, rising living standards, modernizing and professionalizing its military, and engaging the world through multilateral organizations to promote national sovereignty, stability, and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. By 2015, China's economy had grown in value 30-fold from \$360 billion in 1990 to \$11 trillion, and was the world's second largest by exchange rates.¹ In 2012, China became the largest trading nation in the world with \$3.87 trillion in combined imports and exports.² It supplanted the U.S. in 2010 with the largest percentage of world manufacturing activity at 23 percent.³ Despite these achievements, China's per capita GDP at exchange rate values was \$7,590 in 2014, ranked 95th in the world and comparable to Bulgaria.⁴ In contrast, the U.S. had a per capita GDP of \$54,629, placing it in 10th position.

While China's development over the past 40 years has been remarkable, it still has a long way to go to modernize its economy and raise the living standards of its people. Nor is the future without significant challenges. As living standards rise so do labor costs, until now a significant source of its competitive advantage. Additionally, China's future demography is inauspicious, the result of its "one child" policy and low fertility rates of 1.6 children born per woman in 2014.⁵ Further, economic development has been fueled in part by industrial overinvestment and debt-fueled infrastructure expansion, particularly at the local level. Similarly, China's state-owned enterprises have been sheltered from international competition, reducing their global competitiveness. Adding to these challenges, China's populace is ever more globally connected and concerned about environmental degradation and political corruption, posing a challenge to CPC legitimacy.

As China grows into its role as a responsible stakeholder in the international system and a regional and world power, its neighbors and countries with interests in the Pacific have expressed concern over what they perceive as an increasingly belligerent and confrontational foreign policy. China's growing confidence and comprehensive national power, manifest in its diplomatic and economic clout and rapidly improving military capabilities, have led countries in East Asia to seek shelter behind U.S. military power.⁶ It remains to be seen whether China will be able to resolve its territorial disputes and secure its interests peacefully, per its rhetoric, or if tensions and provocations will lead to conflict, sanctions, or much worse.



Figure 2: East China Sea Territorial Claims

Source: <http://www.china-briefing.com/news/2011/05/31/chinasterritorial-disputes-in-the-south-china-sea-and-east-china-sea.html>

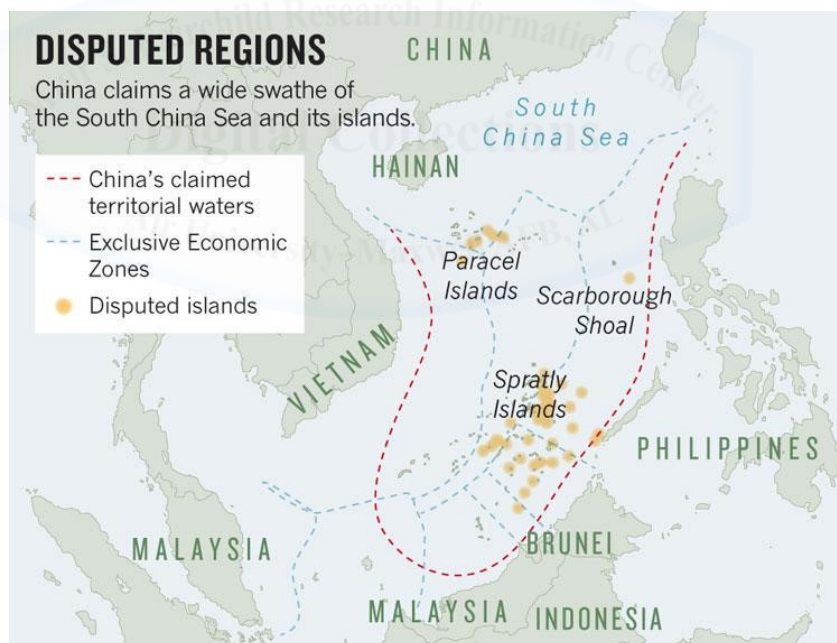


Figure 3: China's Nine-Dash Line Territorial Claims

Source: <https://chinadailymail.com/2012/05/25/chinas-nine-dashed-line-in-south-china-sea/>

1949 – 1976

On 1 July 1921 in the “New Heaven on Earth” district in Shanghai, the CPC held its first meeting.⁷ From this small convocation of thirteen delegates grew a party of 60,000 in just six years. They partnered with the Nationalists, led by Chiang, to end warlordism and consolidate Chinese rule under a central body. The Soviet Comintern, the international communist body, was there to support China’s fledgling party. More importantly, it was there to establish control and retained a significant influence over the CPC until Mao was able to purge “the Moscow-oriented Politburo members...in July 1945,” after which he dominated the CPC “until his death in 1976.”⁸ The alliance between the communists and Nationalists was tenuous from the start, and ended in 1927 when Chiang’s army attacked the CPC and PLA.⁹

In 1931, on the heels of the CPC’s drubbing by the Nationalists, Imperial Japan invaded Manchuria and installed a puppet government, extending its military and political control and access to raw materials.¹⁰ The Japanese continued to occupy Manchuria and later other parts of China and Southeast Asia until the end of World War II.¹¹ The Nationalists made little response to the invasion until 1937, when Japan moved south into China proper. This forced Chiang to divert his attention away from fighting the communists and toward resisting the Japanese, though the communists never strayed too far from his thoughts. He described the Japanese as “a disease of the skin,” but the communists as “a disease of the heart.” The Soviets also viewed the Japanese occupation as a threat, which helped persuade Soviet leader Joseph Stalin to normalize relations with the U.S. and China in the hopes of protecting his eastern border and containing Japan.¹² This was followed in 1939 by a Soviet-Japanese neutrality pact, leaving China and the U.S. to fend off Japanese incursions, while the Soviets continued to send China military aid.¹³

Both the Soviets and Americans supported Chiang and the Nationalists during WWII, providing military equipment and supplies.¹⁴ The U.S. issued the “Open Door Note” to Japan on 21 November 1941 in support of China’s “territorial integrity and equality of commercial opportunity.”¹⁵ It further called for “the withdrawal of all

Japanese military forces from China” and support for the Nationalist government. Additionally, it stationed forces in China and India to support a military buildup and nominally provide supplies to Nationalist forces. America also flew a significant airlift mission between the two countries, with which it delivered “nearly 740,000 tons of cargo...dwarfing the supplies delivered to China by land” during the period, Japan having severed the main logistics corridors.¹⁶

U.S. support for Chiang and the Nationalists continued after the war, enabling troop movements to combat communist forces. Because of WWII’s devastating impact on European nations, some of whom had territories in Southeast Asia, and with the defeat of Japan, President Franklin D. Roosevelt feared a regional power vacuum would create an opportunity for increased Soviet influence. His hope in supporting China was that, as a large and populous country, it could provide regional stability and a counterbalance to the Soviets.¹⁷ For their part, the Soviets finished WWII in control of Manchuria, parts of northern China, North Korea, and various offshore islands.¹⁸ During and shortly after the war, the PLA had grown from 30,000 to over one million troops, and the communists “felt ready to challenge Chiang for national supremacy.” The Soviets held influence over the CPC during this time, though not nearly as strongly as Stalin had hoped. Conflict between the Nationalists and communists subsided temporarily between 1945 and 1946, with both the U.S. and the Soviets attempting to negotiate peace. These efforts were unsuccessful and China’s civil war resumed in late 1946.¹⁹

The failures at mediation in the Chinese Civil War, and Mao’s view that the U.S. favored Chiang, resolved the internal debate within the CPC about whether to lean toward the West or toward the Soviets.²⁰ This became known as the policy of “leaning to one side,” and Mao used it to paint those preferring the West as leaning toward imperialism whereas those who leaned, as he did, toward the Soviets leaned toward socialism. Some in the CPC attempted to arrange secret agreements with the U.S., but nothing came of it because America could not be seen to support a communist government and Mao could not accept U.S. support of Chiang.

On 2 August 1949 Ambassador John Stuart “and other leading members of the U.S. embassy flew out of the country. It would be thirty years before Washington posted

another ambassador in the China mainland.”²¹ Stalin continued his efforts to influence and control the CPC, with the terms of the Sino-Soviet treaty of 1950 largely favoring Moscow.²² Stalin’s hope was to make China a client state, and its international isolation by the U.S. after the defeat of Chiang’s Nationalists played into that plan. Nonetheless, Mao continued to resist subordinating China to Soviet machinations, leading to increased tensions between the two countries, particularly after Stalin’s death in 1953.

The founding of the PRC on 1 October 1949 formally ended Nationalist rule.²³ As Chiang retreated to Chengdu and later Taiwan, U.S. foreign policy toward China, to which it had shelled out more than \$2.5 billion in support of the Nationalists, seemed an utter failure.²⁴ Some, like Republican Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, saw East Asia as “ultimately even more important to our future peace than is Europe.”²⁵ Republicans blamed the Democrats for losing China to the communists, which also seemed to cement the perception of a “global, monolithic” communist movement, a unitary force endeavoring to destroy the capitalist democracies of the world.²⁶ This was perhaps more grating on the U.S. psyche given the longstanding commercial, religious, and cultural ties between the two countries. America had been trading with China since the late 18th century, and was its second largest Western trading partner after Britain for several decades.²⁷ Moreover, Christian missionaries had been active in China for many decades, and had spread information about Chinese culture through books and articles. These accusations dovetailed into Senator Joseph McCarthy’s witch hunt in 1950 to root out communist infiltrators from the U.S. government and the State Department in particular.²⁸

Communist China’s foreign policy in 1949 and 1950 was ideologically motivated and aggressive.²⁹ China lent support to communist movements and insurgencies in Southeast Asia, invaded and gained sovereignty over Tibet, and readied for an assault on Taiwan. In 1950 the Korean War saw direct conflict between Chinese and U.S. forces across the Korean Peninsula. After General Douglas MacArthur’s drive north toward the Yalu River, China responded with air and ground forces and pushed the Americans and South Koreans back past the 38th Parallel.³⁰ At the conclusion of the war in 1953, some “40,000 Americans and more than 200,000 (and perhaps as many as 400,000, Chinese

including Mao's own son) had died, largely fighting each other."³¹ Both Stalin's death earlier that year and President Dwight Eisenhower's threats to use nuclear weapons helped bring about the current armistice, but Sino-U.S. relations were severely damaged.³² Thus began America's international isolation of China and its support for Chiang's government in Taiwan as the legitimate Chinese government.³³

U.S. domestic politics continued to be hostile to the CPC, mourning the "loss of China" with the defeat of the Nationalists and fearing the growing influence of the Soviet Union in Asia.³⁴ Meanwhile, Mao continued to focus on the Western influences surrounding him, including French Indo-China and the Nationalists on Taiwan.³⁵ The military deficiencies laid bare by the Korean War meant China had to depend on the Soviets for modern military equipment and technical expertise, giving Stalin more control. Absent the Korean War, China likely would have received diplomatic recognition by the U.S. after its expected conquest of Taiwan.³⁶

In 1954 China signed the Panchsheel Treaty with India, outlining the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect for territory and sovereignty, nonaggression, non-interference in internal matters, equality, and peaceful coexistence.³⁷ Through this treaty, China was attempting to keep India out of the U.S. orbit and aligned to the socialist bloc while simultaneously improving relations with a nation with which it had outstanding territorial disputes. Meanwhile, China offered these same terms to Burma (Myanmar), along with a pledge not to support Burma's communist insurgents. Burma agreed to remain neutral in the Sino-U.S. tensions, which China considered a foreign policy victory.³⁸ China continued its charm offensive across Southeast Asia, but only to those nations not in a defense alliance with the U.S. However, because of its displeasure with the Soviets, China also "offered direct negotiations with the United States, which began at the ambassadorial level."

That same year China sent a delegation to the Geneva Accords to press the Vietminh to settle with the French and agree to a divided Vietnam.³⁹ Chinese military and economic support to communist leader Ho Chi Minh's forces provided leverage to help settle the conflict. It also left a fragmented Southeast Asia, which would help preserve China's clout and allow it to dominate in the region. During 1954, the First Taiwan Straits Crisis erupted when Eisenhower lifted the U.S. prohibition on Taiwanese attacks

against mainland China.⁴⁰ Loosed from his restraints, Chiang's forces blockaded a portion of the Chinese coast. China responded by harrying Taiwanese lines of communication and shelling its garrisoned islands, necessitating repeated U.S. naval support to resupply and evacuate Taiwanese forces. As a result of the crisis, the U.S. entered into a mutual defense treaty, guaranteeing to safeguard Taiwan and implicitly extending the U.S. nuclear umbrella to it.⁴¹

Meanwhile, the Sino-Soviet relationship continued to sour with the appointment of Nikita Khrushchev as the First Secretary of the Soviet Union in 1955.⁴² Particularly irksome to Mao was his adoption of a policy of "peaceful coexistence" toward the U.S. and his downsizing of the military. These efforts diminished the force of Soviet support for Mao's plan to retake Taiwan and instilled in Mao a sense of betrayal and distrust. Khrushchev's approach was to avoid conflict with the U.S. that might trigger the "massive retaliation" espoused by Secretary of Defense John Dulles and President Eisenhower, while allowing time for Marxist economic policies to prove the superiority of socialism over capitalism.⁴³ Further damaging the relationship between Mao and Khrushchev was Khrushchev's speech denouncing Stalin, the cult of personality, and autocratic rather than collective leadership. These criticisms played into the hands of Mao's rivals in the CPC because they could have equally been leveled against him. Relations between Beijing and Moscow remained rocky and international political recognition of China remained limited. Meanwhile, the United Nations (U.N.) embargo, enacted during the Korean War, remained in effect and was a drag on China's economy.

In 1958, Mao launched the ill-starred Great Leap Forward. He sought with this initiative to modernize and industrialize the interior of China, reduce its dependence on Soviet technology, and collectivize governmental, industrial, and agriculture activity through the establishment of communes.⁴⁴ Mao also aimed to reduce China's debt burden to Moscow dramatically, which at that time consumed roughly "40 percent of China's trade earnings from the [Soviet Union just] to pay the interest owed." The Great Leap Forward was Mao's all-out drive for national self-sufficiency, useful to a nation internationally isolated politically and economically. After four years, the Great Leap Forward ended in a calamitous failure and marginalized him from politics while others went about attempting to right China's economy.

Not satisfied with his economic initiatives, in 1958 Mao instigated the Second Taiwan Straits Crisis by ordering the PLA to shell the islands of Quemoy and Matsu, which were garrisoned by Nationalist troops.⁴⁵ Mao's intent was to push the remaining Nationalist forces further from the mainland. In response, U.S. military leaders recommended military intervention and saw the use of nuclear weapons on the Chinese mainland as a likely necessity to stop a PLA advance. During the crisis, the Soviets supported China, with Khrushchev sending a letter to President Eisenhower threatening Soviet intervention if the U.S. attacked China.⁴⁶ At the same time, U.S. officials feared the Nationalists might escalate the conflict in an attempt to drag America into a war with China to support their cause.⁴⁷ China offered to engage in talks with the U.S. during the crisis and the U.S. agreed. Although the shelling continued, China began shelling only on odd days as a concession. In response, the U.S. pressed Chiang to publicly renounce the use of force to reconquer the mainland.⁴⁸

The following year a significant diplomatic event occurred with "the first U.S.-Soviet summit meeting since the advent of the Cold War."⁴⁹ After his summit with the Americans, Khrushchev visited Beijing and attempted to convince Mao to accept a "two Chinas" settlement. This would require China to recognize the legitimacy of Taiwan and accept Chiang's rule there. In return, the Nationalists would foreswear any intentions of trying to retake the mainland and recognize the CPC as the legitimate government of China. Khrushchev's suggestion was not well received, and Mao's feelings of betrayal led him to prepare to sever ties to the Soviet Union completely. As a rebuke to Khrushchev, China published an editorial in early 1960 excoriating Moscow's abandonment of Leninist ideology.⁵⁰ Khrushchev, fearing being embroiled in a Sino-U.S. conflict, subsequently recalled "all Soviet advisors and technicians in China," ending the decade of Sino-Soviet alliance.⁵¹

China's foreign relations problems were not exclusive to the Soviets. The Tibetans, restive and dissatisfied under communist rule since 1951, rebelled in the Lhasa Uprising of 1959.⁵² The Dalai Lama, the religious and governmental leader of Tibet, fled across the shared but contested China-India border and was given sanctuary in India. India-China relations had suffered ever since China's covert construction of a road connecting Tibet to Xinjiang in the disputed territory of the McMahon Line, a territorial

divide drawn by the British in 1912 but rejected by China.⁵³ India saw China's road construction as highly provocative, particularly because it was near the Kashmir region, under dispute between India and Pakistan. Border skirmishes between India and China started in late 1959, and in 1962 erupted into "a major Chinese offensive along much of the border." With the Indian army routed, China withdrew back behind the McMahon Line. A blossoming Soviet-India relationship only exacerbated tensions in the run up to the Sino-Indian conflict. Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s the Soviets provided India with economic and military support, and Khrushchev's visit to India in 1960 only strengthened that commitment.⁵⁴ The same year China crossed the McMahon Line and attacked Indian outposts the Soviet Union agreed to share fighter jet technology with India that it had refused to share with China.

With the Sino-Soviet split nearly complete, China aimed to seize the reins of the international socialist movement, and continued to denounce the Soviet abandonment of socialist principles. America saw the dispute between the communist countries as an opportunity, but effectively took no action.⁵⁵ Not only did the Americans feel they could not abandon Taiwan, they also hoped the split would drive the Soviets, who were seen as the more valuable prize, toward the West.

While adding to its soft power with the international socialist cause, China continued to develop its hard power and pursued nuclear weapons, becoming a nuclear power in 1964.⁵⁶ This led the American public to view China as even more dangerous than the Soviets. President Lyndon Johnson's characterization of America's entry into Vietnam that same year was "to turn back aggressive Chinese communism." America's policies toward East and Southeast Asia in the 1960s and 1970s were in direct response to the threat of Chinese communism spreading throughout the region in a "domino effect."⁵⁷ Despite declaring a "no first use" policy, both superpowers saw China's independent nuclear policy and development as dangerous.⁵⁸ For China's part, it now lumped the Soviets into the imperialist camp along with the West. Ironically, the same day China tested its nuclear weapon Khrushchev was dismissed and replaced by Leonid Brezhnev.

The mid-1960s also saw a significant increase in Sino-Soviet border conflict in the Xinjiang region of northwest China. Part of China's motivation for inflaming the border dispute was to delegitimize the Soviets in the eyes of socialists and third world countries China hoped to lead. The Soviets were characterized as no different than the white colonialists that had occupied Asia and Africa.⁵⁹ To some degree, the tensions with the Soviets drew attention away from the disastrous economic effects and famine that resulted from Mao's Great Leap Forward. China's ultimate hope was to weaken Soviet influence in the region and abroad while creating a sense of shared victimhood and purpose in shifting the world away from a bipolar order. As a result, troop concentrations began to build up along both sides of the border, and the Soviets threatened the use of nuclear weapons against China. The dispute simmered for five years until China conducted a number of attacks on Soviet forces in 1969 in "the eastern littoral of Siberia, [which at that point] contained more Soviet tanks and artillery pieces than did East Germany."⁶⁰

While the Chinese and Soviets were skirmishing in China's northwest, they both continued their support for the North Vietnamese in their struggle to overthrow the south and gain control of the country. "Soviet military aid...was rolling across Chinese rail lines toward Hanoi."⁶¹ China had limited national defense capability in the 1960s and 1970s and saw brush fire wars like Vietnam as a way to keep the U.S. preoccupied.

This outward hostility by China stemmed in part from domestic upheaval brought about by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. After being relegated to secondary status due to the failure of the Great Leap Forward in the early 1960s, Mao unleashed the Cultural Revolution to regain political control over the country. He created a cult of personality with which to threaten his adversaries, and reasserted the dominance of "Mao Tse-tung thought" over society. A campaign against the so-called "Four Olds" ensued, which endeavored to dismantle traditional Chinese notions of authority and culture, responsible in Mao's eyes for holding the country back. The Cultural Revolution was officially ended in 1969, after incredible turmoil and deprivation, but remnants lingered on until Mao's death.

China also actively supported so-called “people’s wars of national liberation,” which were nascent insurgencies and socialist movements in developing countries. Antipathy toward colonialism and imperialism were combined with the desire to unseat Taiwan as the internationally recognized and legitimized representative of the Chinese people. Together with foreign aid, China’s influence with these recently established, developing nations led to support for its eventual supplanting of Taiwan in the U.N. in 1971.⁶² If nothing else, Mao’s China engaged the world in ways consistent with ideology and revolutionary communism, struggling against capitalism and imperialism.

Major changes began with President Richard Nixon’s visit to China on 21 February 1972 as Mao brought himself more into the U.S. orbit.⁶³ This realignment, along with their newly won seat in the U.N., also began the thawing of China’s long international diplomatic freeze out. The détente between China and America was particularly important given the disastrous consequences of Mao’s Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution.⁶⁴ Moreover, the conflict over the border with the Soviet Union had only continued to grow, with “25 percent of the Soviet ground and air forces” posted along the border by the mid-1970s.⁶⁵

Despite improving relations, China continued to view U.S. and Soviet military strength in Southeast Asia, and the improving relations between the two superpowers, as a means of containment with the consequent analysis that the region was “a critical battleground for safeguarding China’s national security.”⁶⁶ Part of its conception of national security involved the various islands and reefs in the South China Sea, which Beijing had long coveted. In 1974 it acted on these claims by sending a naval force to occupy the Parcel Islands in the Gulf of Tonkin, which were already occupied by a Vietnamese garrison.⁶⁷ Vietnam’s forces, weakened by a decade of war, were unable to rebuff the Chinese forces and withdrew.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, “Mao adopted the foreign [policy] strategy of ‘leaning to one side’ in the Sino-Soviet alliance,” as a counterbalance to what was seen as “American imperialism.”⁶⁸ Moreover, Mao saw China as distinct from either of the superpowers, and instead as the natural leader of the third world, supporting early efforts to spread revolutionary socialism and armed struggle within these countries. Mao’s

foreign policy also supported his crusade against “the so-called ‘three mountains’ of imperialism, feudalism-colonialism, and bureaucratic capitalism.”⁶⁹ He hoped to capitalize on shared “experiences with colonialist and imperialist repressions and subjugation,” and claim the mantle of spokesman for the victims of the imperialists.⁷⁰

1978 – 1992

After Mao’s death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping was politically rehabilitated and returned to politics in 1978.⁷¹ It was at this point Deng set about replacing the political cadre known as the “Long Marchers” with younger, better educated and more economically liberal members.⁷² He also sought to improve relations with the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and to reassure China’s neighbors that it sought peaceful development. This included a Sino-Japanese friendship treaty, signed in 1978, pledging to resist any establishment of hegemony in the region.⁷³ In 1979 the U.S. and China normalized diplomatic relations, but progress was stunted by the passing of the Taiwan Relations Act in the U.S. Congress.⁷⁴ Prior to this, America had sought, fairly successfully, to shut China out of the international order to the benefit of Taiwan. These attitudes proved sticky and Taiwan continued to be a divisive issue for Sino-American relations.

Perhaps most noticeable about Deng’s leadership was the dramatic shift away from ideologically driven foreign policy toward keeping a low profile internationally and focusing on development.⁷⁵ Deng’s approach to foreign policy can be translated as, “observe the development soberly, maintain our position, meet the challenge calmly, hide our capacities and bide our time, remain free of ambition, never claim leadership.” Nonetheless, he demonstrated his willingness to act to protect China’s reputation. Toward this end, Deng garnered support for a punitive war with Vietnam in February 1979 after it invaded Cambodia, a Chinese “client state.”⁷⁶ The Soviets supported Vietnam, which sought to end the rule of the brutal Khmer Rouge. During the brief conflict, the PLA captured several border towns in north Vietnam, declared their objectives accomplished, and withdrew back behind China’s borders. What became clear during the conflict was the poor state of China’s military capability and the need for

modernization and professionalization of the armed forces.⁷⁷ China suffered 20,000 casualties against auxiliary Vietnamese troops, and Hanoi maintained control of Cambodia.⁷⁸

Meanwhile, detente with the U.S. and opening up to the world came about at the same time as relations with Moscow fell through the floor.⁷⁹ Soviet troop levels continued to mount along the Soviet-Chinese border and in December 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, contrary to Chinese desires. Inharmonious relations with the Soviets pushed China closer to the American orbit as China sought a new supplier of foreign technology and expertise to effect its modernization.⁸⁰

In fact, Deng's vision was called "the four modernizations" and sought to develop China's "agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense."⁸¹ These modernizations would serve as "...a great and profound revolution...our new Long March...to change the backward condition of our country and turn it into a modern and powerful socialist state."⁸² Other former "Long Marchers," those who had been part of the original cadre of communist party members during the civil war against the Nationalists, but who had been purged by Mao during the Cultural Revolution, resisted these changes and what they saw as the abandonment of Marxist ideals.⁸³ This tension between communist ideology with its economic central planning and support for capitalist principles and economic liberalization has been a continuous feature across modern Chinese politics.

Nonetheless, economic liberalization was central to China's development and reform, and the core element of this liberalization was the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs).⁸⁴ These zones acted as laboratories for establishing local economies insulated from central planning and capable of soliciting foreign investment.⁸⁵ Four of these zones were officially established in the southeast in 1980, but were limited to economic liberalization and capitalist mechanisms without political reforms that could threaten party control.

In 1982, Deng's diplomacy with the U.S., along with a willingness to make concessions, garnered positive results with respect to the Taiwan problem.⁸⁶ The U.S. and China issued a joint communique stating that America would eventually diminish its

military support for Taiwan and that China approached the Taiwan issue with peaceful intent. This joint statement seemed to dislodge a significant obstacle and promised to ameliorate China-U.S. relations. Meanwhile, relations between the U.S. and Soviets began to go downhill during President Ronald Reagan's terms.⁸⁷ Decrying the perceived loss of American power, and when combined with strong anticommunist feelings, Reagan "confronted the Soviets on virtually every front." This was a boon for China as the U.S. put less pressure on it for concessions and was more willing to sell it arms, to include rocketry technology, which helped launch China's space program.

The early 1980s are also notable because China began espousing a new definition for itself, which sought greater opening up to the world and modest liberalization of the economy while preserving CPC rule. This new model was socialism with Chinese characteristics.⁸⁸ Supporting China's transformation was Deng's success in transferring the reins of the party to a younger generation. He largely accomplished this by 1982, having effected the retirement of all but two of the remaining "Long Marchers."⁸⁹ Another critical element to modernization of the economy was engaging the Chinese diaspora to help integrate China into regional and global economies and fostering greater economic links with Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan.⁹⁰ This was the essential element to early efforts at economic modernization, and shared language and culture facilitated access to the Chinese market through those hubs.

However, Deng's policies of opening to the world and his efforts to accelerate expansion of the SEZ program were not without costs. In 1986, China's foreign trade deficit reached \$15 billion.⁹¹ This led the central government to appropriate foreign currency from local governments to increase the availability of foreign exchange temporarily. However, a shift toward export-oriented growth would be necessary to create favorable trade conditions for a growing China, specifically a trade surplus. Consequently, China shifted its export industries away from foodstuffs and extractive commodities and toward manufactured goods. By 1987 China had achieved a trade surplus and was on its way to becoming the newest workshop of the world, capitalizing on low-cost labor.⁹² Agricultural production, as one of the four modernizations, was also

reformed to meet the needs of China's growing population. Between 1979 and 1995 China's grain output had increased roughly 40 percent from 332 to 460 million tons.⁹³

Deng was also able to improve China-Soviet relations during this period. "China signed a major economic agreement with Moscow in late 1986."⁹⁴ This improved trade relations with the Warsaw Pact countries as well, whom China saw as "safer" to deal with than the West because trade would not come with attendant liberal ideologies, as was often the case with U.S. trade. Sino-Soviet détente was brought about on the Soviet side by Mikhail Gorbachev, who was "prepared, at any time and at any level, to discuss with China questions of additional measures for creating an atmosphere of good neighborliness."⁹⁵ By 1989 Sino-Soviet relations had been normalized.⁹⁶

That year proved a difficult one for China domestically. One of the consequences of China's opening up had been high inflation, joblessness, and calls for democracy. As a result, protests broke out all over the country. PLA forces were ordered to restore order through violence, most famously against the protesters in Tiananmen Square, resulting in an international backlash from the West and subsequently an internal retreat from reforms by the CPC. Chinese politics veered back to the left with hardliners reasserting control. Protester demands for political liberalization were seen as linked to China's economic liberalization and the penetration into Chinese society of bourgeois political views as a result of opening to the West. Thus, the social crackdown and political purges that followed provided an opportunity for those who supported Soviet-style economic central planning to slow and try to reverse Deng's initiatives.⁹⁷

Deng did not sit still and wait for this reversal to happen. Instead, he sought to reinvigorate and expand the SEZ initiative by promoting the inclusion of additional coastal cities in the south.⁹⁸ This included reforming inefficient state-owned enterprises, which had been strengthened by the central planners at the expense of independent, fast growing companies. To further his plan, Deng secured his protégé Zhu Rongji's promotion to the State Council, where economic planning was controlled.⁹⁹ Zhu provided a counter narrative from within the party to the Marxist view of the codependency of political socialism on central planning. Instead, Zhu and Deng's vision was political socialism and party control with pragmatism in economic matters, to include capitalism,

to boost growth and bring China out of third-world status. Deng also resigned from his last official post as head of the military commission and convinced the remaining “elders” still involved in politics, and still supporting Marxists economic views, to resign with him and pass on the torch to a younger generation.

While Deng fought and largely won these internal battles, he could not prevent the sanctions imposed by the West after Tiananmen Square. Instead, he advocated for diplomatic concessions to the U.S. in an effort to repair relations quickly. He counseled settling issues related to “the unfavorable balance of trade and intellectual property rights...according to international practice.”¹⁰⁰ The elements within the party working against this were concerned that “peaceful evolution,” the notion that the U.S. was attempting to induce political reform in China through peaceful economic, diplomatic, and cultural engagement, threatened the party.¹⁰¹

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker’s impending visit in November 1991 brought internal debates to a head, particularly in light of the coup attempt against Gorbachev in August and the subsequent secession of Soviet republics that led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Many in the CPC saw peaceful evolution as a threat to the party’s sustained rule, and hard-liners advocated for a break with the U.S. and a return to a more Maoist approach, proposing a reinvigorated socialist education of the people, à la the Cultural Revolution, and economic collectivism and self-sufficiency.¹⁰² To combat these forces, Deng used his influence with the PLA, and agreed to accelerate its reform and modernization, in exchange for the PLA’s support of his economic agenda. With the support of the army behind him, Deng toured the south and encouraged its industries and localities to copy the industrialization of the West and the other Asian Tigers like South Korea—whatever was necessary for sustained economic development.¹⁰³

From an ideological standpoint, the loss of the Soviet Union as a counterbalance to the U.S. in 1991 struck fear into the hearts of CPC members. Their concern was that China could now “simply be ignored” by the West. Essentially, the fall of the Soviet Union created an ideological crisis, heralding the victory of democracy and capitalism over communism and central planning. Deng fought against desires to turn inward and to

attempt to create a self-sufficient state as a mechanism to shore up “the people’s democratic dictatorship.”

International trade relations were restored relatively quickly after Tiananmen Square, Japan being the first nation to lift sanctions in 1991.¹⁰⁴ President George H. W. Bush also worked to dampen the U.S. response and sanctions, “keeping China eligible for most-favored-nation trading status” while resisting efforts to link trade and human rights.¹⁰⁵ The Bush administration felt China’s strategic importance to the U.S. was too great to allow it to be upended by a difference of values. Additionally, China worked to normalize diplomatic relations throughout most of Asia. As part of this effort, China sought to strengthen the principles of democratization and multi-polarization in the existing international order.

With international relations back on solid ground, Deng needed to shore up his transformation of China’s foreign and domestic policies. To do so, Deng brought about a “Grand Compromise” at the Fourteenth Congress of the CPC in 1992. To safeguard China’s economic development, Deng ensured PLA support for “the primacy of the party” and a unified nation, that regional tax revenues would be remitted to the central government, and that the government “would finance the Army’s continued modernization.” This compromise preserved control by the party while allowing for economic liberalization, backstopped by the power of the PLA.¹⁰⁶ By the end of the congress, Deng and the PLA had secured the future of China’s economic reform and continued integration into the global economy. Whatever best met China’s needs, even if it meant using capitalist methods, would be labeled market socialism with Chinese characteristics, jettisoning many of the old Marxist debates.¹⁰⁷ Deng’s approach to China’s future prosperity became clear: modernization through whatever means necessary, without political liberalization.¹⁰⁸

1993 – 2005

The end of the Cold War saw the dissolution of a bifurcated world stage, where nations were aligned either with the Americans or the Soviets. This shift in the

international political landscape resulted in a more fragmented, regionally oriented world, particularly in Asia.¹⁰⁹ China's strategy shifted accordingly, but it continued to avoid political agreements that would limit its ability to engage bilaterally to resolve disputes or entangle it in security alliances of mutual support and defense.

As with changing political dynamics, global trade underwent dramatic shifts in the 1990s. In 1992, the U.S. imported \$26 billion from China and exported \$7 billion.¹¹⁰ These imports were largely comprised of consumer goods, the prices of which had dropped over time as manufacturing moved to China to capitalize on the low cost of labor. It was estimated that Chinese labor costs during this period were 1/65 those in America.¹¹¹ While U.S. workers in the manufacturing sector often struggled or lost their jobs, the American consumer largely benefited from cheaper goods. By 1995, China was the U.S.'s sixth largest trading partner, and its fourth by 1997.

China has long recognized the importance of its trade relations with the U.S. In 1993, President Jiang Zemin articulated China's guiding principles in its relations with the U.S. as "increasing trust, reducing trouble, developing cooperation, and avoiding confrontation."¹¹² China understood that cooperation was in its best interest, rather than attempting to challenge the U.S., for which it would have been ill suited given its limited comprehensive national power. At the same time, Most Favorable Nation (MFN) status was seen by the Chinese as a "weapon" used by the U.S. to pressure China into transforming its political system along with its economy.¹¹³ To that end, U.S. human rights conditions connected to China's MFN status were seen as a clash between American and Chinese value systems.¹¹⁴ President Bill Clinton severed this link in 1994, recognizing, as his predecessor did, that U.S. economic interests related to China were significant enough to compromise on China's human rights record.¹¹⁵

Another major sticking point in U.S.-China relations during the 1990s involved intellectual property rights.¹¹⁶ America threatened and sometimes imposed sanctions on China as a result of intellectual property rights violations, which had been a concern over the previous decade as well. Views within China were somewhat mixed. On the one hand, China's domestic laws were relatively underdeveloped and it lacked strong legal protection to enforce property rights and contracts—unsurprisingly for a communist country that adopted the state ownership model. At the same time, the counterfeit goods

produced in large quantities by Chinese manufacturers were, and continue to be, an important contributor to economic development and rising living standards, comprising roughly 2 percent of total world trade, not including domestic consumption.¹¹⁷

Despite concerns over intellectual property, U.S. investment in China grew rapidly during this period. In 1992, U.S. companies invested over \$4 billion in China.¹¹⁸ By 1996, it had risen to \$14 billion. Foreign direct investment in China overall also experienced a dramatic rise, growing more than 10-fold from \$3.4 billion in 1990 to \$40 billion in 1996.¹¹⁹ Annual growth in trade between the U.S. and China was 16 percent throughout the 1990s, increasing from \$20 billion in 1990 to \$95 billion by 1999.¹²⁰

Chinese sentiments regarding capitalism were also transformed during this period. In the 1980s, remnants of communist dogma, with its central planning and total state ownership model, still captured the minds of many writers and leaders in China. However, by the 1990s, many in China perceived the benefits of a competitive marketplace and began to reorient efforts toward transforming China's economy along capitalist lines.¹²¹ What prevented China from doing so immediately was not uncertainty about the right path so much as that "conditions were not yet ripe."¹²² This included China's legal framework, its educational approach, and mechanisms for oversight and enforcement, among other things. Moreover, as China's capacity to provide low- and high-value added manufacturing increased, the supply chains of the world began to gravitate toward it. This represented a shift in the global division of labor, turning areas that had been part of the periphery into core components of the global economy.¹²³ This shift came at the expense of some of its neighbors, who had benefited from low-cost manpower but whose growth and rising living standards made China more competitive.¹²⁴ Similarly, China had to make significant investments in its industrial capacity. By 1995, for example, China had become the world's largest steel producer.¹²⁵

China's foreign policy in the mid-1990s was not devoid of challenges, however. These mostly stemmed from territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas. Between 1994 and 1995, China built facilities on Mischief Reef, part of the Spratly Islands, claimed by Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam, in

the South China Sea.¹²⁶ China built more structures in 1999, heightening tensions with its southern neighbors and stoking fears of Chinese dominance and bullying.¹²⁷

1995 – 1996 also saw yet another Taiwan Straits Crisis, with China firing barrages of missiles in the vicinity of Taiwan as part of military tests.¹²⁸ Also included were Chinese war games in the Taiwan Straits, these in response to President “Lee Teng-hui’s U.S. visit to promote his Taiwan independence cause.”¹²⁹ The U.S. responded to China’s war games by posting two aircraft carriers off Taiwan. Understandably, this behavior caused anxiety among China’s neighbors, many of whom continue to have territorial disputes with China and see no upside to a U.S.-China war.

The international political response to these actions were overwhelmingly negative, and helped convince China that it needed a change in its approach, or at least its rhetoric. Subsequently, China characterized itself as a “responsible big country” committed to “safeguarding world peace and stability.”¹³⁰ It went further to highlight the historically destabilizing nature of military expansion and alliance, using Europe before the two world wars as examples. Instead, China articulated a desire to establish a “new concept of security,” based on “mutual trust and common interest,” and the promotion of trust through dialogue, cooperation, and respect for sovereignty. Along these lines, Sino-Russian relations also improved to a “strategic partnership.” Peaceful rhetoric aside, China became Russia’s largest customer for military equipment.¹³¹

As part of its effort to engage multilaterally, China began participating in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations meetings, and in 1997 helped establish the ASEAN+3 forum, adding itself, Japan, and South Korea.¹³² Similarly, during the Asian Financial Crisis that same year, it withheld a currency devaluation that would have allowed its exports to remain price-competitive with its neighbors. This was roundly viewed in the region as positive and responsible.

Chinese perceptions of America continued to shift in the late 1990s. On the one hand, it saw President Clinton’s appointment of a “Special Coordinator for Tibetan Affairs,” and continued U.S. support for negotiations with the Dali Lama, as supporting criminal separatism.¹³³ On the other hand, Chinese views of American democracy grew

much more favorable, and perceptions that it legitimately served the interests of its citizens was a significant departure from Marxist views held in the past.¹³⁴

China continued its economic expansion and integration into the world economy by establishing free trade agreements throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. These were more often conducted with countries outside East Asia than among East Asian nations.¹³⁵ The principal component of these agreements was for the importation of raw materials and commodities for use in manufacturing, energy, or foodstuffs. Thus, China became an essential link in the global supply chain, as well as an important value-added manufacturer for a range of goods. Countries dependent on extractive industries sent their commodities to China to be incorporated into manufactured goods, which supported China's own infrastructure development. Countries that exported goods to other markets contracted their manufacturing operations to China to capitalize on the low cost of productive factors. These agreements were joined by significant foreign direct investment, and much of this originated from East Asian areas, particularly Hong Kong and Taiwan.¹³⁶ China saw an increase from \$20 billion in the 1980s to \$200 billion by 2000 and \$450 billion by 2003.¹³⁷ China's East Asian neighbors, having longstanding ties to Western markets as well as overseas Chinese businesses, acted as gateways for investment and economic development in China.

China continued to pursue multilateral relationships in the early 2000s by sponsoring the creation of regional organizations such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2000 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001, focusing on security and economic development in Eurasia while upholding and reinforcing the notion of national sovereignty and non-interference in internal matters.¹³⁸ With Russia as a party to the SCO, the Sino-Russian relationship strengthened and reinforced a commitment by both countries to multi-polarity.¹³⁹ Russian arms sales to China increased, as well as cross-border trade. At the same time, the U.S. defense establishment briefly re-characterized China as a "strategic competitor," shifting its tone to one more adversarial.

Further integration into the global trade network occurred in 2001 when China joined the World Trade Organization, with U.S. backing.¹⁴⁰ China's persistence over the course of 15 years was aimed at being able to influence the external global economic

environment by gaining access to a key international institution affecting trade. Relations between the U.S. and China after the September 11th attacks also improved based on China's swift support of America's war on terrorism.¹⁴¹ President George W. Bush, during a visit to China, reframed the Sino-American relationship away from one of strategic competition and toward "candid, constructive, and cooperative" friendship. Secretary of State Colin Powell characterized the relationship as "great-power cooperation" in protecting the world from global terrorism.

Directing its attention toward its neighbors, on 4 November 2002 China signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. By doing so it "reaffirm[ed] [its] commitment to the...1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea" and "the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia."¹⁴² This declaration confirmed a commitment to: freedom of navigation through and overflight of the South China Sea, peaceful resolution of territorial disputes, and exercise of self-restraint to include refraining from inhabiting uninhabited islands, reefs, and shoals. As if that were not enough, on 8 October 2003 China formally joined the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.¹⁴³ The purpose of the treaty is to "promote perpetual peace" and solidifies a commitment to respecting sovereignty and freedom from outside interference while renouncing "the threat or use of force." Significantly, China adhered itself to ASEAN by signing this treaty, rather than pressing ASEAN to change the treaty to gain China's cooperation.¹⁴⁴ Nonetheless, China risked little in doing so as the treaty dictates consultation and consensus on resolutions and confers no adjudication authority to a supra-national body that could encroach on China's sovereignty.

In 2003, China actively supported and promoted the Six-Party Talks to address North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons.¹⁴⁵ These talks aimed to find a peaceful solution and avoid nuclear proliferation on the Korean Peninsula, thus securing greater stability. The Six-Party Talks in particular demonstrated a more active foreign policy with China seeking to shape and promote stability within existing international frameworks, rather than focusing specifically on its economic development or resource security. Unfortunately, not all of China's interactions with neighbors were positive. Relations between China and Japan in the early 2000s suffered a number of setbacks.

These stemmed largely from “historical baggage and growing nationalism...; territorial disputes...; and Japan-Taiwan ties....”¹⁴⁶

By 2005, the “China threat” literature regained prominence in America. China’s military expenditures nearly doubled between 2000 and 2005, increasing from \$37 billion to \$71 billion.¹⁴⁷ The U.S. Defense Department expressed significant concern over China’s military modernization and buildup of conventional capabilities.¹⁴⁸ For the most part, however, this increase was not a product of greater defense spending relative to GDP, which has remained at just under 2 percent per year. Instead, China’s dramatic growth in GDP, nearly doubling from \$1.2 trillion in 2000 to \$1.9 trillion in 2005, sent its defense spending soaring.¹⁴⁹ Nonetheless, China has pursued advanced weaponry that poses a threat to American power projection in the Asia-Pacific. At the same time, China passed the Anti-Secession Law, which claimed the Taiwan issue was an internal matter for China to resolve, outlined mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of reunification, but reserved the right to use force if Taiwan achieved independence or if peaceful reunification became hopeless.¹⁵⁰ While the U.S. supported the “one China” view, it saw the law as unnecessarily provocative and has been committed to encouraging the peaceful resolution of unification.

2006 – 2016

In the mid-2000s, China continued to build on its earlier efforts during the Mao era to woo African nations and engage in bi- and multilateral forums to foster development, secure resources like foodstuffs and extractive commodities, and gain access to developing markets.¹⁵¹ In 2006 there were “five major diplomatic events in Beijing’s diplomacy toward Africa.” In keeping with its policy of non-interference, China sought these greater economic ties while largely refraining from involving itself in the internal governance of these nations.

Latin America has also seen an increase in attention from China, with trade going from \$2 billion in 2000 to more than \$7 billion in 2005.¹⁵² Expansion in trade has been coupled with foreign direct investment, \$5.5 billion in 2004, as part of China’s “go

abroad' strategy.” These efforts have brought China a sense of resource security, but have drawn the criticism of human rights advocates because investments are often made in authoritarian regimes with records of human rights violations.¹⁵³

China's military modernization suffered a setback in 2006 as Russian arms sales largely stopped, in part after complaints by the U.S. that they were regionally destabilizing.¹⁵⁴ In the absence of arms from Russia, China gave a boost to domestic arms manufacturers, which had been encouraged to reverse engineer Russian technology.¹⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the Sino-Russian cooperative relationship strengthened in the 2000s, despite areas of economic competition between the two nations.

Domestic politics saw a shift toward nationalism in support of legitimating the continued rule of the CPC and identifying it as “the defender of national interests—national unity, sovereignty, and economic prosperity.”¹⁵⁶ Achieving a coherent national identity to underpin this sense of nationalism remains a challenge given China's ethno-cultural and linguistic diversity—China has 56 different ethnicities and 297 dialects. This growth of nationalism and prosperity has also brought about calls from within the CPC to diversify China's currency reserve exposure to the U.S. dollar, which exceeded \$1.5 trillion in 2006, toward a basket of currencies more representative of the world economy.¹⁵⁷ Additionally, President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao launched “new socialist countryside” initiatives in the mid-2000s to spread the benefits of China's tremendous growth beyond the southern coastal manufacturing sector.¹⁵⁸ These initiatives were meant to raise rural incomes and stimulate domestic consumer demand. This income redistribution was also meant to increase social stability and support a “harmonious society.”¹⁵⁹ However, militating against these efforts has been the general lack of social safety nets across China, which leads its people to high rates of saving to hedge against personal hardships, thereby discouraging consumption.

China continued to develop its diplomatic rhetoric in the mid-2000s in response to concerns voiced regionally and in the U.S. Its narrative proclaimed China's “peaceful rise,” underpinned by the global stability of the U.S.-led international order. China recognized that its own best interests lie in continuing to support and participate in the existing order. As part of this message, China was at pains to contrast its development

over the last several decades with the experiences of Europe in the first half of the 20th century and with the Soviets in the second half. Globalization and economic openness made possible China's rise, without the need to resort to conflict or major power war.¹⁶⁰ At the same time, America urged China to become a "responsible stakeholder" in the international system. This responsibility, borne out of China's position as a "global economic leader," was to the preservation and stability "of the international system of open trade and investment."

In 2008, China became the world's third largest economy, with a nominal GDP of \$4.6 trillion.¹⁶¹ Nonetheless, China's leaders expressed concern that China's growth up to that point had been "unstable, unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable," principally due to "overinvestment and underconsumption."¹⁶² Along with recognizing threats to its continued growth, China stepped up engagements with both Japan and Korea. The first trilateral meeting between these three countries was held in 2008, and focused on discussing a framework for an East Asian economic community and eventually a security community.¹⁶³

The global recession brought about by the U.S. housing market collapse motivated China to criticize the U.S. and advocated for a move away from the U.S. dollar as the world reserve currency at the 2009 G-20 summit.¹⁶⁴ Taking such a strong stance with regard to the global economy, and issuing a strong critique of U.S. economic leadership, was a significant shift away from China's foreign policy in the 1980s and 1990s, which shunned leadership roles—particularly considering that by 2010 trade between the U.S. and China had risen to \$365 billion and America was one of China's largest trading partners.¹⁶⁵

China's economy has continued to grow dramatically in the 2010s. By 2014 China's nominal GDP had risen to \$10.4 trillion and its economy was the second largest in the world.¹⁶⁶ Although its growth rate is down from "an average of 10 percent per annum in the first decade of the century," it still remains near 7 percent, a significant growth factor for a large economy.¹⁶⁷ President Xi Jinping has described this slower growth, with just over 6.5 percent in 2016, as the "new normal" for China's economy.¹⁶⁸

On this trend, China's economy is likely to surpass the U.S. in exchange rate value around 2020.

Nonetheless, China's growth has not been entirely positive. It has suffered from overinvestment in industrial capacity and infrastructure at the expense of its environment, which hinders continued development.¹⁶⁹ One example of this overinvestment is China's steel industry. By 2007, China had 36 percent of world steel production capacity, at 489 million tons.¹⁷⁰ "In 2015 China produced over 800m tonnes, or about half of the global total," but prices had dropped by over 30% as China's economic growth slowed to below 7 percent a year and domestic demand fell.¹⁷¹ By some estimates, "global capacity exceeds demand by up to 600m tonnes a year." Moreover, although China is effectively the world's workshop, the products it exports are largely those of foreign brands, who have outsourced the manufacturing of their intellectual property.¹⁷² Thus, it is not Chinese goods that are taking over the world; rather, it is goods made in China by foreign companies. Indeed, in 2014 "19 of the top 25 global brands [were] American."¹⁷³ This means the value of brand differentiation, encompassing the bulk of profits, confers largely to the companies of foreign countries. Chinese manufacturers earn the incremental revenues from the volume of production associated with a low cost of labor, thus lowering the value added from Chinese manufacturing.

As has been the case in the past, China's territorial disputes have recently resurfaced as a source of significant tension in the region. In 2010 several ASEAN member states urged the U.S. to "reassert a larger role in the region." This was unusual considering that ASEAN gatherings had traditionally been non-confrontational and consensus oriented. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton supported these views and stated that "freedom on the South China Sea was in America's 'national interest.'" In response, China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi stated, "China is a big country and other countries are small countries, and that's just a fact."¹⁷⁴ His forceful and negative response during the gathering, while uncharacteristic, seemed to mark a change of tenor in China's interactions with its neighbors over contested territory.

As a result of growing Chinese influence in East Asia, and heightened concerns expressed by China's neighbors, in 2011 the U.S. announced an expansion of its activities in the Pacific, which came to be known as the Pacific "pivot."¹⁷⁵ This is perhaps

the most significant development affecting China's foreign policy in the last few years. Several measures in the plan related to an increased military presence, while the U.S. also joined the East Asia Summit and made progress in negotiations for a free trade agreement called the Trans Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership (TPP), an agreement that does not include China. Asia played a large role in U.S. trade, comprising 23.5 percent of exports, its second largest region after North America, and 32 percent of imports, its largest region, in 2010.¹⁷⁶ American goals in increasing its presence in the region were to provide stability for an increasingly important trading area, particularly around the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea, while reassuring East Asian governments of America's commitment to the region.

In 2012, Japan succeeded in causing a flare-up of sovereignty and territorial issues. The Governor of Tokyo declared his intention to lead an effort to purchase three of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands from their private Japanese owners. Oil and gas reserves are suspected to exist in the waters surrounding the islands, making them valuable to the governments that claim them. China and Taiwan claimed the islands were part of Taiwan.¹⁷⁷ The Japanese government moved in to prevent the sale, and purchased the three islands to avoid them falling in to the hands of provocative Japanese nationalists. Both China and Taiwan demarched Japan, and the islands have been the source of regular confrontations by vessels of the three governments ever since.¹⁷⁸

China's claim is that the islands have been part of its territory since the Ming Dynasty in the fourteenth century and were subsequently transferred to the authority of Taiwan in the seventeenth century.¹⁷⁹ Japan asserted that the islands were uninhabited and laid claim to them in 1895 during the Sino-Japanese war. The cessation of the war saw China cede Taiwan (then Formosa) and its "appertaining islets" to Japan. However, Japan's assertion is that the incorporation of the islands was separate from the treaty, and thus not subject to the Cairo and Potsdam declarations restoring Taiwan to China after WWII. The U.S. declared its neutrality in the dispute, though it passed administration of the islands to Japan in the 1970s when it returned Okinawa, and reaffirmed its support of Japanese administration. The U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security

extended to the islands as part of the Okinawa Reversion Treaty, and thus the U.S.'s obligation to defend Japan.¹⁸⁰

In the South China Sea, China's claims have been even more destabilizing in recent years. The Nine-Dash Line it promulgates on its maps claims sovereignty of over 90 percent of the South China Sea. According to a senior Chinese diplomat, "the dotted line...indicates the sovereignty of China over the islands in the South China Sea since ancient times."¹⁸¹ The claim was first put forward by Chiang's Nationalist government back in 1947.¹⁸² Since then, China has taken up many of the claims. The area within China's Nine-Dash Line contains "10 percent of the global fisheries catch and...half the world's shipping tonnage traverses it." China claims over 2,000 years of fishing history in some parts of the South China Sea, which it sees as conferring sovereignty over the area. Additionally, it undertook substantial land reclamation projects in 2015 to build up various rocks and reefs, which under the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)—a convention China is a signatory to—do not confer either the 12-mile territorial waters privileges nor the 200-mile exclusive economic zone rights.¹⁸³

Similarly to its construction projects in the mid-1990s, but on a larger scale, China has constructed port facilities and a runway on Fiery Cross Reef, which it said were for civilian purposes but on which it recently landed a military aircraft.¹⁸⁴ It has also deployed a surface to air missile battery on Woody Island in the Parcel Islands, an island also claimed by Vietnam.¹⁸⁵ Some observers speculate that this deployment is part of its anti-access/area denial strategy to frustrate the U.S. military presence and capabilities in the region.¹⁸⁶ China has also cut off exports of rare earths to Japan over the detention of a Chinese fishing vessel, sent an oil rig into waters claimed by Vietnam, declared an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) over contested waters in the East China Sea in 2013, and debuted a new stealth fighter that seemed to have been copied U.S. technology on the same day Secretary of Defense Robert Gates visited with China's president in 2011.¹⁸⁷ These actions demonstrate a degree of confidence and willingness to take a large number of provocative measures seemingly out of step with China's past policies and rhetoric of self-restraint, a peaceful rise, and good will toward its neighbors.

China's external actions coincide with significant political upheaval within the CPC. Its current leader President Xi Jinping has, since coming into office in 2013, waged a far-reaching anti-corruption campaign, targeting previously untouchable members of the CPC.¹⁸⁸ He has admonished party members to not engage in conspicuous consumption and to adhere to the law. However, while he appears to be acting with propriety, a number of his targets have been political opponents, and speculation has been raised that these anti-graft arrests and convictions are more about shoring up Xi's power base than about rooting out corrupt officials. It is also not clear if there is a connection between the more hardline approach being taken in domestic politics and that being taken in China's interactions with the outside world. In conjunction with Xi's anti-graft campaign has been an effort to strengthen party discipline and tamp down internal debate.¹⁸⁹ This has included a new found emphasis on Marxism-Leninism and increasingly ideological rhetoric, for some harkening back to the days of Mao.¹⁹⁰

Interpretation

China's foreign policy has shifted and in some ways repeated itself over the last six decades. It has been shaped by global and local wars, economic growth and upheaval, the rise and fall of Soviet communism, a dramatic increase in globalization and interconnectedness, and decades of Pax-Americana. These changes have influenced Chinese culture, its ambitions, and its world view. Throughout this period, China has periodically struggled to sustain internal unity and conformity, while maintaining its almost monomaniacal focus on economic development. Likewise, it has at times struggled to integrate itself into the international order in ways that reassure its neighbors and their allies.

During the Mao era, ideology and "leaning to one side" dictated China's actions. A bi-polar world, split between the Soviets and Americans, meant that falling out with one superpower would draw China closer to the other. This oscillation was part of Mao's deliberate plan to keep a distance from both superpowers while pursuing his revolutionary and socialist causes. Simultaneously, he sought to overcome the diplomatic

freeze the U.S. placed on China in favor of Taiwan. Instrumental to this effort was his courtship of other “third world” nations, and China’s support of “people’s wars of national liberation.”

Perhaps more important than his foreign policy choices were Mao’s domestic initiatives—if only for the calamity they visited upon the Chinese people. Domestically, he sought to catapult China forward toward modernization and prosperity with his Great Leap Forward. Instead, much of China’s nascent industries were devastated and its agricultural reforms produced famine. This led to Mao’s sidelining in Chinese politics until he was able to launch the Cultural Revolution, which tried to erase the remnants of traditional Chinese social structure and culture. This too proved a failure, and deeply scarred society. Belatedly, and partly in response to conflict with the Soviets, Mao began the process of normalizing diplomatic relations with America.

That said, it was not until Deng’s time in power that China’s fortunes began to turn around. China’s foreign policy under Deng was dominated by economic considerations and aimed squarely at gaining access to the global economy, encouraging investment, and transferring technology and skills to China. The fall of the Soviet Union sent the Marxists in the CPC into a defensive crouch, and forced Deng to redouble his efforts at spreading economic liberalization. He succeeded in purging the remaining cadre of Marxist central planners and forestalled an economic retrenchment. With the help of the PLA, he was able to secure China’s future economic prosperity. Along with economic development came China’s participation in multilateral organizations to enhance China’s diplomatic standing and reassure its neighbors of its peaceful intentions. That said, Deng would brook no notion of political reform or the loss of CPC control over the country.

Since Deng, China’s leaders have continued on the path of economic development and opening up to the world. They have largely been true to his dictum of biding time, hiding capabilities, and avoiding leadership positions. China’s rate of economic growth rising prosperity has been breathtaking. Its increase in stature has brought with it greater efforts to modify the international order to enshrine principles of conduct it values. To that end, China has sought to shift the focus of human rights away

from civil liberties and toward rising living standards. It has also championed the respect of sovereignty and noninterference in a country's internal matters.

The assertion of these values has at times increased tensions between China, its neighbors, and America. Repeated flare-ups in the Taiwan Straits and over claims in the East and South China Seas have led to calls for American intervention and international legal adjudication, which China has roundly rejected. These strained relations with its neighbors have the potential to be amplified by China's internal difficulties. Its economy is slowing, its population is aging, environmental degradation has been severe, and its investments both in infrastructure and industrial capacity remain underutilized. Meanwhile, China's social safety net remains inadequate to boost consumption and it is under pressure to more forcefully enforce intellectual property rights. Nonetheless, China's growing influence on the world is inescapable. What remains to be seen is how continued exposure to the U.S. led international regime will shape its behavior and how its actions will shape the international order.

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Chapter 3

U.S. and Chinese Foreign Policies Compared

Nineteenth century American and modern Chinese foreign policy have much in common. From experimental forms of government that challenged the prevailing systems of the time, to the pursuit of free trade and economic development over military alliances and constraints on unilateralism, the U.S. and China demonstrate traits rising powers in general will likely share. At the same time, the established global powers saw the rise of these nations as a threat to their dominance and influence. Both America and China often avoided outright confrontation, but as their economies and military strength grew, they became ever more assertive and the incumbent powers began engaging them more assiduously. Additionally, both countries made claims larger than their comprehensive national power seemed to support at the time. In response, the status quo powers challenged, and often ignored these claims. In military matters, America and China retained the prerogative to act unilaterally according to their national interests. When dealing with border disputes, they attempted to settle them both by force and through diplomacy. Internal political division also played an important role in the trajectories of these two countries, and was partially responsible for variability in their foreign policies.

However, differences did and do exist in the approaches of the two countries. Whereas America transitioned from non-interference to active intervention, China transitioned from active intervention to non-interference. Similarly, America sought to spread its system of democracy and civil liberties, whereas China largely refrained from trying to change other international actors. In addition, the response by the incumbent powers to the rising nations differed, with Britain eventually seeing America as a stabilizing force in the Western Hemisphere and America seeing China as a destabilizing force. Further, Britain sought to model the American system in its relations with its colonies, while America sees China's political system as unsound and contrary to its values. These differences were influenced by the differing systems and values of the two countries, which continue to be a sources of tension today.

When evaluating China's foreign policy, consideration of the structure of the international system provides additional insight into likely future events. In this regard, China has demonstrated a willingness to act in its core interests, conforming to realist expectations of its behavior. At the same time, it has invested in international institutions to promote development and stability. These relationships not only provided a mechanism for China to assert its values before the international community, but helped condition China into the normative international order. As such, China appears to be mostly a status quo power, appreciating the benefits of American stability. Nonetheless, it has recently been more willing to challenge U.S. leadership in international institutions, and to establish parallel organizations to compete directly with American influence.

In forecasting the future, various trends in China's progress and development seem likely to continue, though with countervailing influences at work. Likewise, changes in the global context and relative shifts in comprehensive national power will influence outcomes. In particular, American obligations in other parts of the world diminish its ability to shape events in the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, continued interaction between China and America produces a conditioning effect that impacts the objectives of both as increased interaction produces shared norms. This may allow for the U.S. to cede influence to China in the future, or may deepen feelings of mistrust. China's increased assertiveness resultant from its growing economic and military power, combined with an uncertain domestic political trajectory, make the future difficult to judge. Hegemonic war as a catalyst for change in the international system remains a possibility, but if America feels its interests secure in the presence of a hegemonic China, a peaceful rise remains in the offing.

Similarities and Differences

In comparing nineteenth century American foreign policy with that of modern China, the similarities are more pronounced than the differences. To start with, both nations' systems of government were very much experimental. America's form of representative government with power devolved to the states ran contrary to European monarchical rule, and even up to the time of the American Civil War, it was not clear that

this model would endure, nor that it should be emulated.¹ Particularly before the Civil War, Americans tended to identify more strongly with their state than with their country.² Similarly, when China adopted communism it was still essentially a proof of concept as to whether it could compete successfully with representative democracy and capitalism. In the days after the establishment of the PRC, internal divisions existed between those inclined to embrace Western approaches toward development and those who believed in the Soviet model. Mao successfully used this division to marginalize his political opponents and establish central planning as the primary factor animating the economy. Even with Deng's opening up, and China's recent stance on allowing market forces to play a decisive role in the economy, the CPC still retains political control and has ruled out the sort of representative democracy practiced in the West.³ In fact, China's current president has pushed an agenda that veers back toward party discipline and has cracked down on internal dissension. If China is successful in holding back the forces of "peaceful evolution" while transitioning from a developing to developed nation, it will be the first large country in modern times to do so.

These early governmental experiments were a manifest rejection of the prevailing international systems of the time. The U.S. turned its back on the balance-of-power politics associated with the frequently warring monarchies of Europe and mercantile practices obstructing free trade. Washington, Adams, and Jefferson believed the U.S. should be free to progress and develop in accordance with its own path and principles, "free from the complications of the European political system."⁴ In the Western Hemisphere, the U.S. rejected the Old World political system and those parts of international law that were discordant with its political principles. Further, as the nations in the Americas emerged out from under the yoke of colonialism, they adhered to themselves the right to instantiate new international laws necessary to support and comport with their form of government. Thus, they "reserved the right to interpret the principles of international law in force, or to adapt them to their necessities" in ways that could differ from those of the Europeans.⁵

China not only rejected liberalism and democracy, but also the bi-polar world left behind after WWII. Further, Mao fought against the ideological leadership of the Soviet Union in international communism and established China's policy of "leaning to one

side,” pivoting between closer relations with the U.S. and the Soviets, which prevailed for most of the twentieth century. China also advocated for a more “democratic” international order where the voices of “third world” countries would carry more weight. Moreover, it sought to elevate the importance of respecting state sovereignty and noninterference in internal matters, running contrary to the efforts at intervention, regime change, and social democratization pursued by some Western countries under the banner of human rights.

In their dealings with foreign powers, both China and the U.S. accepted the *de facto* governments of other nations as having the legitimacy to negotiate relations. They also adopted a policy of non-interference in internal matters. For the U.S., these principles were contained in Monroe’s message to Congress stating that “our policy in regard to Europe...[is] not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers; to consider the government *de facto* as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it....” Likewise, China first codified its “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” in its treaty with India in 1954, proclaiming “mutual respect for territory and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in internal matters, equality, and peaceful coexistence.” These principles guided the U.S. for much of the nineteenth century and continue to guide China’s foreign policy today in its dealings with countries like Iran, North Korea, and various African nations.

U.S. security policy in the nineteenth century was guided by Washington’s admonition against entangling alliances. As such, America avoided making agreements that might be construed as obligations of mutual defense. This was particularly prominent in its dealings with the countries of Latin America, who hoped for an environment of Pan-Americanism where trade and defense agreements would interlock the nations of the Americas into a sort of federation. Similarly, China mostly refrained from joining such alliances within its region. This includes signing the Treaty of Amity with ASEAN and its Shanghai Cooperation Organization agreements, which enact security cooperation measures and peaceful resolution of differences without creating a mutual defense pact. In this way, both countries preserved flexibility in their foreign policy options, hoping to capitalize on the benefits of closer cooperation without becoming embroiled in wars of another’s making.

The strong emphasis on economic development is yet another area of similarity between nineteenth century America and modern China, particularly after Mao.⁶ America's Neutrality Act during the Napoleonic Wars sought to preserve its independence and ability to trade with all nations of Europe without participating in the conflict. Likewise, it sought stability and security within its near abroad, freedom of navigation, and access to open markets for trade.⁷ Even after the war of 1812 and the considerable anti-British sentiment it engendered, the U.S. continued a vigorous trade with Britain. America also signed numerous trade agreements with Latin American countries and looked to create what was known as the "American system," which sought American dominance over commerce in the Western Hemisphere to the exclusion of European powers. Moreover, foreign direct investment, especially from Britain, was an important element of America's expansion, particularly in infrastructure and the cotton trade.

For China's part, economic development shifted from self-sufficiency under Mao to a focus on attracting foreign investment and acquiring foreign technology and expertise to rapidly develop China's immature industries. Chinese-speaking neighbors like Macau, Hong Kong, and Taiwan served as important gateways between China and the developed world, enabling Western countries to conduct business and make investments in China. America also became an important source of investment and a market for Chinese manufactured goods. Deng's creation of SEZs and their further promotion after the fall of the Soviet Union shored up his economic reforms, which had largely cast aside ideology as a foreign policy consideration. His economic pragmatism became the guiding principle for China's development into the twenty-first century, adopting whatever strategies looked promising and reframing China's political ideology as socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Outsized claims of sovereignty and authority, deemed illegitimate by the respective reigning world powers, also characterized American and Chinese actions in the periods considered. Britain consistently decried and ignored America's claim that it had a special sphere of interest in the Western Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine proscribed monarchism in the new world but the French, British, and Spanish refused to treat it as any kind of legal principle throughout the middle and late nineteenth century.

France invaded Mexico in 1861 and upheld the throne of Maximilian in Mexico from 1864 until his capture and execution in 1867. France abandoned its conquest in the face of overwhelming Mexican resistance, not because of U.S. pressure or its claims under the Monroe Doctrine. As late as 1895, Britain explicitly refused to recognize the Monroe Doctrine during its border dispute with Venezuela over British Guiana. Further, it rejected American Secretary of State Olney's claim that "today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent and its fiat is law."⁸

China's claims in the East and South China Seas have similarly been rejected by the reigning world power, America, and its neighbors. In the East China Sea, China's relations with Japan have soured over incidents related to ownership of the Senkaku/Daiyou Islands, which Japan administers, and the fishing and resource rights accompanying these islands. Its declared ADIZ also overlaps with Japanese airspace, and China demands aircraft within it immediately identify themselves and obey orders issued by its air traffic controllers.⁹ In response, America has routinely flown military missions through the ADIZ without declaring an identification or filing a flight plan, as China requires. In the South China Sea, China subscribes to the so-called Nine-Dash Line in delineating its territorial interests and its military has claimed that "China ha[s] 'indisputable sovereignty' over the South China Sea."¹⁰ To that end it has engaged in land reclamation activities to build up these geological features, establishing ports, runways, and facilities capable of supporting military vessels and aircraft. Again, the U.S. and China's neighbors contest these claims and American military vessels continue to pass within 12 nautical miles of these geological features, which do not confer exclusive economic rights under the UNCLOS.¹¹

Claims by America and China, whether of special interests or sovereignty, have also been matched by a willingness to act unilaterally and a reluctance to cede sovereignty or be subject to supranational adjudication, instead favoring bilateral negotiation. In the case of the U.S., it intervened to prevent Colombian forces from subduing a Panamanian revolt in 1903, allowing America to sign a treaty guaranteeing it exclusive rights to administer a transoceanic canal. Moreover, it demanded Britain pursue arbitration during its 1895 dispute with Venezuela, despite having no claim over any portion of the disputed geography. Similarly, it repeatedly intervened in the Caribbean to

protect the interests of its nationals in Cuba and the Dominican Republic and annexed islands in the Pacific, on the grounds that these islands were strategically important for trade and security.¹²

For its part, China invaded Tibet in 1950 and continues to hold it to this day. It also engaged in active conflict with Taiwan in 1954, 1958, and 1995. Further, China invaded India in 1962 and the Soviet Union in 1969. In 1980 it fought a punitive war with Vietnam to protect its national interests in supporting Cambodia. Further, China refused to acknowledge the authority of the Hague in adjudicating a dispute filed by the Philippines in 2013 over its land reclamation activities in the South China Sea and called for the Philippines to settle the matter through bilateral discussions.¹³ As the U.S. does with the Caribbean, China views these islands as vital to its national defense, economic development, and territorial integrity. China has opposed supranational adjudication in its territorial disputes and has contested interpretations of international law when those interpretations run contrary to its interests. Moreover, its efforts toward multilateralism have been confined to organizations that operate on principles of consensus and cooperation without ceding the authority to act unilaterally.

Both nations also have extensive, shared land borders and have fought wars with their neighbors over border disputes. America invaded Canada in its early years and viewed it with hostile and covetous eyes until Canada's independence in 1867. For its part, Britain was somewhat conciliatory toward the U.S. with respect to these border disputes, with Prime Minister Peel recognizing America's importance as Britain's chief trading partner and not wanting to jeopardize that relationship over "barren lands in North America."¹⁴ President Polk also made treaty concessions during the Oregon Treaty negotiations of 1846. Likewise, America fought wars with both Mexico and Spain over contested borders and territorial expansion, resulting in a more than doubling of the size of the nation and making it a Pacific as well as Atlantic power.

China also engaged in conflict with its neighbors. In the north, the 1960s saw massive troop buildups, particularly on the Soviet side of China's northwestern border, with an outbreak of hostilities in 1969. Recently it has settled its disputes with Russia over their shared borders.¹⁵ Similarly, China fought against India in 1962 over the

disputed McMahon Line and India's sheltering of the Dalai Lama. For both China and America, settlements have been through bilateral negotiations rather than working through multilateral organizations. China continues to insist on bilateral agreements as the appropriate means of settling its territorial and border disputes.

American and Chinese foreign policies have also been shaped by internal divisions. The U.S. was divided between the East and West in its early years, which the French and Spanish sought to exploit.¹⁶ It was also split between Whigs and Democrats based on the strength of their affinity or aversion to Britain. Later, America was divided between North and South and Republican and Democrat, with slavery occupying a prominent place in the conflict. Likewise, early divisions within China were between those who thought it should lean toward the West and those who thought it should lean toward the Soviet Union. Later, after Mao's death, tension continued between those who saw central planning and Marxism as the best way to resist "peaceful evolution" and those who saw economic development and decentralization, sometimes with an attendant political liberalization, as the best chance at prosperity. Both nations feared, with some justification, efforts by outsiders to play on these internal divides in order to manipulate China's and America's foreign policies.

In addition to internal divides, nationalism has been an important influence in American and Chinese foreign policy. In the U.S., the Monroe Doctrine became a symbol of nationalism and patriotism after the Civil War.¹⁷ Not only did it represent American hegemony in North America, but it served as justification for an interventionist foreign policy on the grounds of U.S. commercial and security interests.¹⁸ This transformation would continue to influence views on the Monroe Doctrine for the remainder of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. Similarly, it could be argued that China's more belligerent approach to territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas is a result of a slowing economy and revelations about government graft. Forceful displays of engineering and military prowess directed toward the West have boosted nationalist sentiments and strengthened support for the CPC. At the same time, these controversies have diverted attention away from domestic issues of social insecurity, environmental degradation, and growing income disparity.

Both America and China also used revised narratives to justify their evolving foreign policies while attempting to preserve some semblance of continuity. America's original intention with Monroe's principles was to secure its future development, improve economic relations with its near abroad, and forestall interference from the major powers of the day. From the mid-nineteenth century on, U.S. foreign policy took on paternalistic overtones and espoused the obligation to spread "civilization" westward, southward, and in the Pacific. These were combined with expansionist tendencies and a willingness to intervene, unbidden, in third-party disputes on the grounds of national security interests, revising and redefining Monroe's principles into a doctrine along the way. Similarly, China's participation in multilateral and regional organizations during Mao's rule began out of a desire to erode international support for a separatist Taiwan, secure access to resources and markets for its continued development, and augment its status on the world stage.¹⁹ Only later did this transform into principles of neo-Confucian benevolence emphasizing the responsible, peaceful rise of a large country to its historic place as a major power.

Nonetheless, American and Chinese foreign policies are not perfect analogues. In particular, the U.S. saw the spread of its system of representative democracy, capitalism, and free trade as desirable and inevitable in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In fact, it actively sought to spread democracy and "civilization" through its foreign policy well into the twentieth century, marking a shift from a relatively agnostic approach to dealing with foreign governments in the early nineteenth century. While China's foreign policy under Mao similarly sought to spread communism and support "people's wars of national liberation," China largely ceased its ideological evangelism after Deng and dealt with nations as it found them, representing the inverse transition from that of the U.S.

The characterization by the existing global hegemon of the rising powers is another point of divergence between the U.S. and China. In the case of nineteenth century America, Britain came to see its rise as a stabilizing force in the region that would allow Britain to reduce its military commitments in the Western Hemisphere while still preserving an environment of free trade and protection for its commercial and financial interests. In contrast, America sees modern day China as a regional provocateur

whose actions in relation to territorial disputes have demanded greater U.S. involvement. Indeed, America's strategic "pivot" to the region is meant to protect international shipping lanes and to shore up the security concerns of its allies and trading partners in the presence of a rising China. America continues to press China to become a so-called "responsible stakeholder" and hopes that China's greater involvement in multilateral organizations will increase its willingness to settle disputes peacefully through international institutional mechanism.

Hegemonic reactions to perceptions of relative decline have also differed. Despite America's almost doubling in territorial size after 1848, Britain remained the dominant world economic and military power of the period. By 1851, it accounted for more than half of world iron and cotton textile production.²⁰ In 1857, British financiers had £80 million (\$384 million) invested in American railway construction and operations, the largest group of foreign investors.²¹ However, the late 1850s and 1860s were years of disquietude for Britain. The enthusiasm that fueled commercial expansion abroad had faded as foreign markets resisted modernization, protectionist tariffs were enacted, and investments failed to produce expected returns.²² Further, unrest seemed endemic in its colonies and protectorates. America's ceaseless advance, as well as competition from its former colonies, constrained greater market penetration, bringing about debates in Britain over political reform of the colonial system. The U.S. model was the main influence, whereby Britain would reorganize its colonies under a federal system, retaining control but allowing for greater self-governance.²³ By the late nineteenth century, Britain became resigned to a fate of diminished influence in the Americas relative to the U.S.

Alternatively, American plaudits of China's one-party rule and command-oriented economy have been limited, though not entirely absent.²⁴ While China's growth in the twenty-first century has truly been remarkable, America remains the dominant global economic and military power. Its economy was almost double China's at official exchange rates in 2015, at over \$18 trillion.²⁵ Nearly half of the world's 500 most valuable international corporations in 2014 were American.²⁶ Likewise, the dollar accounted for 81 percent of global trade finance in 2015.²⁷ That same year, total spending on defense was some \$600 billion in the U.S. as compared to \$145 billion in China.²⁸ If

Britain eventually viewed America's rise as benign or even positive in reducing its obligations in the Western Hemisphere while protecting its interests, America's view of China's rise has thus far been less favorable and raised concerns over U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

Differences in American and Chinese foreign policies are also a result of differing conceptions of state authority and international relations. These in part stem from the differences in these countries' respective internal and external constructs. Internally, American views of the relationship between the state and the people tend toward the transactional-*quid pro quo*, and value internal diversity. Externally, Americans seek conventionality, with notions of universally correct behavior and inviolable civil liberties. In contrast, the Chinese state sees its authority as absolute and irreducible, operating in a hierarchical-relational way with its polity and valuing social homogeneity.²⁹ Externally, it holds as sacrosanct the principles of respect for sovereignty, non-interference in internal matters, and consultative diplomacy working toward consensus, similar to the concept of *modus vivendi*.³⁰ This of course does not preclude unilateralism, but circumscribes the issues for which China is willing to act alone and willing to forgo harmony in its external relations. Characterized another way, America accepts internal diversity while expecting external conformity and China expects internal conformity while accepting external diversity.³¹ Moreover, China is a non-democratic country with a semi-planned economy and Confucian values whereas America is democratic with a market economy and values individual freedom.³²

China and the International System

In considering the possible futures for American and Chinese relations and the stability of the Asia-Pacific region, it is useful to consider how states interact. The "international system" of state interaction can be considered generally non-hierarchical. States are thought of as unitary actors and the only legitimate political entity within the system. They are independent and equal in terms of their rights as states, and beholden to no central authority.³³ According to Kenneth Waltz, "international systems are

decentralized and anarchic.”³⁴ This anarchy stands in contrast to intra-state organization, which is hierarchical, with the state retaining legitimate authority over its inhabitants.

At the same time, some states do join supranational organizations, to which they cede varying degrees of sovereignty, and from which springs a degree of order.³⁵ An example of this is the European Union, which sets binding rules for its member states on economic and trade matters.³⁶ Other international organizations are less tightly bound, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In the case of NATO, nations are joined together in a defensive military alliance in which an attack against one is considered an attack against all. However, member states are given the latitude to determine how they will respond when one member is attacked. It authorizes, but does not mandate, the use of force in response.³⁷

While acting individually and as part of larger groupings, states influence each other. These repeated interactions over time establish customs and norms that form the basic structure of the international system, what Alexander Wendt calls “culture.”³⁸ Acting within these norms confers a degree of legitimacy, acting outside them illegitimacy. However, not all states agree with all norms, nor do all states act within them at all times. Additionally, norms can change over time based on a diversity and intensity of interaction and in response to contextual changes, such as perceptions of shifts in relative power. These variances in behavior are often explained in part based on the motivations of actor nations.

State motivations are not necessarily fixed, and depending on the issue, some motivations will be felt more strongly than others. For example, a nation negotiating a free trade agreement is motivated by the potential for future benefit whereas a nation facing a war could be motivated by fear for its very survival. Thus, we often see states acting on issues related to security, values, and prosperity, or what Thucydides described as “fear, honor, and interest.”³⁹ Consequently, the variety of actions taken by states are based on a variety of motivations, some felt more strongly than others, which may change over time in response to contextual shifts in the international system. It seems apparent, however, that states possess core interests that are strongly felt and persistent.

China has several core national interests, including the preservation of CPC rule, reunification with Taiwan, and energy and food security represented by its claims in the

East and South China Seas. Moreover, these interests are tied to China's sense of historical identity and prestige and will prove difficult for it to reach compromise on. Further, China's resistance to compromise on these issues is consistent with its stance on the inappropriateness of external interference in internal matters and its emphasis on settling territorial disputes bilaterally. Finally, China's efforts at reconstructing the international system are geared toward elevating sovereignty and self-determination in the international political dialogue and shifting the debate over human rights away from civil liberties and toward improved standards of living.

In addition to standing firm on its core interests, China continues to see America's security alliances with Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines, and its increased military presence in the region, as a threat to its national defense. These views are reminiscent of Germany's fears of encirclement in the lead-up to World War I.⁴⁰ This created a security dilemma that produced increased military spending and new alliances, which in turn created increased perceptions of threat and even greater military buildup. In particular, China objects to the language of responding to "peripheral incidents" in America's treaty with Japan, and considers U.S. relations with other nations in East Asia as an effort to strategically contain it.⁴¹ The situation is exacerbated by the territorial dispute between China and Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.⁴² The water surrounding these islands contains large oil deposits important to Japan and China.⁴³ Influence over these islands is also important for fishing rights, which are significant culturally and with regard to food security. Taiwan also plays a role in this narrative as a barrier to China breaking through the island chains and into the greater Pacific. Lastly, America's warming relations with India after the Cold War is seen as another attempt at counterbalancing China in Asia.⁴⁴

Regionalism has also clearly become an important part of China's foreign policy as demonstrated by its efforts at going abroad to secure a steady flow of raw materials necessary to continue its growth and economic development, while gaining favorable access to foreign markets for non-competing exports.⁴⁵ As China grows, it is frequently reminded of its position as participant rather than "rule-setter" in the world order. Moreover, it struggles with the tension between a hostile world view that sees containment in a zero-sum competition with status quo powers, and its averred strategy

of “win-win” diplomacy and peaceful engagement. China also sees its efforts at regionalization as a means of normalizing its values and combating calls from the international community for it to “westernize” and “transform.”⁴⁶

Nationalism has been another potent force in China’s foreign policy development in the 2000s and 2010s.⁴⁷ It has assertively confronted what it views as encroachments on its sovereignty, in keeping with its growing clout and comprehensive national power. Given this behavior, it seems unlikely China will cede increasing levels of state authority and sovereignty to international institutions. Its institution-building efforts have generally avoided processes of adjudication outside of bilateral negotiation, and it feels its influence has not kept pace with its growing importance to the global order.

Nonetheless, China participates in a number of international institutions and has signed and ratified several international conventions, such as UNCLOS and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).⁴⁸ China has participated in the G-20, including holding its chairmanship in 2005.⁴⁹ It maintains a seat on the U.N. Security Council where it typically participates in votes for collective action and favors abstention over vetoing resolutions that violate its espoused values.⁵⁰ China has also helped establish several regional organizations dedicated to enhancing stability and cooperation, such as ASEAN+3, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and the SCO. Further, it has gone beyond the region in establishing institutional bodies to enhance trade, provide loans, secure raw materials, and build infrastructure, such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. China has also been a productive member of the Six-Party Talks, beginning in 2003 after North Korea withdrew from the NPT.⁵¹ Its support for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula has increased with time, bringing it more in line with America’s position. Most recently it has levied bans on trade with North Korea as part of U.N. sanctions in response to North Korea’s continued nuclear weapons testing.⁵² Similarly, both America and China share common interests in “antiterrorism, nonproliferation, trade liberalization, environmental protection, energy, transnational crime,” and disease prevention and control.⁵³ These activities demonstrate not only a commitment to international institutions, but also to shaping those institutions in ways that comport with its values.⁵⁴

The preceding paragraphs have demonstrated China's defense of its core interests, willingness to participate in international institutions, and where it has tried to shape, and has been shaped by, interactions with other states. These activities relate directly to questions over whether China is a revisionist or status quo power. Briefly, status quo powers are those that accept the existing international order, and for the most part their place within it. They abide by the rules and norms established by that order and pursue changes or gain power only to the point that their security interests are met, without trying to modify the system. Alternatively, revisionist powers are those dissatisfied with the current order or their place in it. They seek to "grab territory, conquer each other, or change the rules of the system."⁵⁵ These actions are inherently destabilizing in that status quo powers, as beneficiaries of the existing system, resist change, increasing the potential for conflict with revisionist powers.

In the early days of the CPC under Mao, China appeared to be a revisionist nation bent on representing the third world and creating a new international order, one that did not depend on the U.S.-Soviet bipolar system. However, after Mao's death and Deng's rise to power in the 1970s, China took a less confrontational approach to the international system, and generally accepted and became a beneficiary of the status quo. Its focus on peaceful development and avoiding confrontation, except when it saw its vital national interests in jeopardy, meant it benefited from the stability of the international order.⁵⁶

Going forward, the fundamental question is not whether China is a status quo or revisionist power, but where along this spectrum it sits. For China, answering this question rests on two main factors: its "capability to challenge the international system" and its motivation to do so.⁵⁷ Without sufficient motivation, China will not make the challenge, and without sufficient capability, it cannot. Capability without motivation is benign, and motivation without capability is impotence. China's capability and motivation is directly offset by the degree to which status quo powers have the capacity and desire to resist change.

As China's comprehensive national power grows, the capability of the international community to challenge its efforts declines in relative terms. China's growing importance to the global economy and its ability to project political will through military power raises the costs of, and diminishes the capacity for, resistance by the status

quo powers. However, motivation matters because “states are less concerned with power imbalances than they are about who holds power.”⁵⁸ Of course, the more China sees itself gaining from the current system, the more likely it is to help preserve the status quo, with the opposite also holding true.⁵⁹ Consequently, its perception of the U.S. as a rule-setter and holder of power affects its motivation. To China, the U.S. represents both an opportunity and a threat. Similarly, if the U.S. and other status quo powers come to see China’s rise as more benign than hostile, their concerns over its growing power will abate.

The Future

A number of existing trends affecting China’s approach to foreign policy seem likely to continue into the future. First, by all accounts China’s acceptance of the transformative effects of market forces is undisputed, leaving a return to any sort of communist central planning unlikely.⁶⁰ What remains to be seen is the pace at which its financial, banking, and monetary systems will be opened to foreign ownership, investment, and use. Second, Chinese manufacturers will continue to gain in sophistication and adopt cutting edge technologies, making further inroads into the manufacture of high-value-added exports, thereby competing more directly with developed nations. A trend that could retard this progress is if Western companies shift manufacturing away from China, capitalizing either on developments in automation and additive manufacturing techniques or poorer countries that reduce the proportion of costs associated with labor. Third, China’s services industries will mature as a result of serving a large, discriminating domestic market, and are likely to become competitive with Western nations. However, domestic regulation and protection of these industries will influence how quickly they can innovate and evolve, as will their ability to meet the demands of foreign customers. Fourth, as more students return home to China after being educated in American and European universities, generally considered the best in the world, its share of scientific and technological achievements will grow. Efforts by American and European countries to retain these graduates will attenuate this growth.

Outside of these trends, global contextual shifts will also influence China's actions. For example, America's ability to shape events in the Asia-Pacific region may be impacted by having its attention drawn elsewhere. This could be toward Europe to confront a more aggressive Russia, or the Middle East to fight terrorism. Its divided attention and limited resources may appear to China as an opportunity to move more aggressively in turning its territorial claims into *faits accomplis*.

Similarly, if American fortunes decline and its ability to secure its interests in the region wanes, it may cede ground and influence to China out of necessity. As a historical analog, the "Great Depression" in Britain from 1873 to 1896 meant it experienced real and relative economic stagnation and decline in the global economy.⁶¹ Falling prices, profits, and economic contraction led to disillusionment about Britain's ability to sustain its global empire. It was commonly felt that "Britain must acquiesce in the 'Americanisation of the world.'"⁶² This represented a significant shift from the antagonistic views toward America held only a few decades earlier. A similar shift in opinions could occur in America if it felt China had been sufficiently socialized into the normative international order to adequately preserve U.S. interests, and that Chinese ascendancy was inevitable. By 2013 a majority of Americans felt U.S. power and importance in the world had declined, a reversal from the previous decade.⁶³

As America continues to try and shape China's conduct and perspectives, so too will China attempt to shape America's. As China and the U.S. continue to interact, the process of mutual conditioning will continue, exposing each to the other's values and expectations. With time and exposure, these differences will seem less stark and foreign and the possibility of compromise will increase. The rapidity of this process will be influenced by the mutual perceptions of both sides. If they see each other as enemies, interaction may devolve into outright conflict. Alternatively, if America and China see each other as friends, a shared identity will develop and more inclusive norms are likely.⁶⁴

China's position on Taiwan, as an internal matter with respect to territorial integrity, remains one of the most significant issues between it and the U.S.⁶⁵ From China's perspective, a comparable analogy would be if the Confederate government,

viewed as subversive and illegitimate, had absconded to Cuba after the Civil War and been diplomatically recognized and militarily supported by Britain. Further, imagine that Britain had subsequently successfully isolated the U.S. on the world stage for over twenty years, and intervened on behalf of the Confederates in repeated skirmishes. China sees U.S. arms sales as encouraging other nations to support the (as seen by China) illegitimate government of Taiwan and jeopardizing “peaceful reunification.”⁶⁶ Further, when relations between the U.S. and China are going well, Chinese views characterize the U.S. as preventing reunification. But, when tensions arise, views shift toward seeing the U.S. as actively promoting Taiwanese independence.⁶⁷

History will continue to influence China’s foreign policy as well. Animosity toward Japan over atrocities committed during WWII endures in the public psyche. Civil unrest in China has broken out over recent efforts in Japan to erase these events from its history books.⁶⁸ Additionally, China resents what it sees as outsider interference in its reunification efforts with Taiwan, considered an internal matter. It links these with its past experience of isolation and victimization by European imperial powers. Moreover, China’s leaders could adopt a Sino-centric world view, arguing that the growth of China’s comprehensive national power establishes a mandate for a return to its traditional role in regional and world affairs.⁶⁹ This could serve as justification for irredentist policies that further exacerbate regional tensions and jeopardize stability.

In some respects, these ideas parallel U.S. views of Manifest Destiny in the 1840s, which proclaimed the rightful spread of Anglo-Saxon settlers westward throughout North America.⁷⁰ Belief in America’s natural, even divine, right to access to the Pacific and reign supreme in the region led to wars with Native Americans, Mexico, and Spain. Adding to America’s potential willingness to confront China is its past experience in major-power wars. America prevailed in both world wars, and has essentially been militarily successful, though not always able to achieve its political objectives, against every adversary it has faced in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Of course, no major power war has taken place since the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Nonetheless, it does not seem likely, given established norms of international behavior and security alliances with the U.S., that East Asia will return to some sort of tributary system centered on China.⁷¹ Nor is it clear exactly how China's efforts to elevate the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in internal matters will shape regional and Western expectations and strategies of engagement. China has sought to convince the world it is a "responsible and peaceful great power" intent on "political and economic cooperation."⁷² At the same time, its multilateral approach has for the most part eschewed encroachments on the sovereignty of other nations, demands for political reform, or calls for mutual defense.⁷³ In this respect China is displaying the same behavior America did in its foreign policy approach to Central and South America in the early nineteenth century.

As China develops, its view of itself, its region, and the wider world are changing.⁷⁴ It is shedding the "victim mentality" of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and adopting the views of a regional hegemon. As an example, in the 1990s Chinese writers held the opinion that having the dollar as the global reserve currency was beneficial to a stable global economy.⁷⁵ Since the financial crisis of 2008, China has repeatedly stated that a dependence on the dollar is destabilizing to world economic health.⁷⁶ Likewise, Chinese scholars in the 1990s perceived a policy of appeasing the U.S. as most beneficial to China's development and as a way to mollify the U.S.'s policy toward China.⁷⁷ In contrast, China launched the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in 2015 to compete directly with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, seen as being controlled by America and stipulating onerous Western reforms on borrowers.⁷⁸ China will continue to press for a more inclusive, less U.S.-dominated world order, and will continue to construct international organizations that provide alternatives to those led by the West.

Finally, China's internal politics will play a part in its international relations. In particular, President Xi's consolidation of power through political purges associated with his campaign against graft, and reassertion of Marxist and traditional Chinese social views, could entrench a hardline stance. Combining these attitudes with a more assertive foreign policy, underpinned by an ever more capable military, increases the likelihood

America and its allies will have to contend with China militarily. However, if Xi's stance softens or his political rivals manage to oust him and his power base, it seems likely China would revert to its previous path, allowing greater political participation and a more democratic approach tolerating dissension, at least within the CPC. In either case, it remains unclear to what degree PLA provocations are a result of direction from the CPC or in spite of it, and to what degree moderating forces within the CPC could restrain China's military.

In keeping with Robert Gilpin's view of hegemonic war as an agent of change in the international system, one outcome of the rise of China is that the U.S. will seek to contain it.⁷⁹ If China resists it could lead to a hegemonic war between the rising and declining powers. The Monroe Doctrine can be seen as an articulation of American ambition in the nineteenth century, and war was never off the table. Likewise, China's Nine-Dash Line and claims of "indisputable sovereignty" over the South China Sea, point toward an assertive, unilateral, and revivalist stance on strategic interests, belying efforts at relationship normalization, multilateralism, and peaceful cooperation.⁸⁰ Contrary to the views of some,⁸¹ China's threat tolerance as a result of its past experience with imperial victimization might be lower, particularly in light of a newly achieved near-parity in military capability and a growing sense of nationalism. At the same time, America has demonstrated its willingness to use military force against weaker adversaries to secure its national interests.

At this point, however, neither country seems interested in conflict. China has not taken overly threatening action toward Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, or the Philippines. Moreover, America's "pivot" to Asia has been tepid, as has its criticism of China over its recent activity in the East and South China Sea. Further, given China's and America's growing economic interdependence, the cost of a war between the two grows commensurately. Unless China engaged directly in military conflict with an American ally, U.S. engagement with China over these disputes is likely to remain largely diplomatic, with limited military involvement. For its part, China still has more to lose from conflict with America than it has to gain, and the more threatening it appears to its neighbors, the closer to America it pushes them. This mutual reluctance to escalate

tensions and China's emphasis on maritime crisis management and confidence building measures, indicates that neither power wants conflict.⁸²

Interpretation

The commonalities between U.S. and Chinese foreign policies during their respective periods of growing comprehensive national power are many. Both countries represented uncommon forms of government and posed a challenge to the status quo. Additionally, free trade and economic development largely dominated their activities. However, both countries reserved the option to act unilaterally and militarily to protect their interests, gain territory, and further their political objectives. In response, Britain in the nineteenth century and America in the twenty-first century confronted the rising powers to sustain their regional influence. Both a rising America and a rising China sought to avoid outright confrontation, but became more forceful in asserting their will as they gained in power. Additionally, American and Chinese claims of sovereignty were routinely contested by the incumbent powers. At the same time, American and Chinese foreign policies were occasionally driven by internal politics.

Nonetheless, differences remain between the two. America began with a policy of non-interference and transitioned to active intervention while China followed the opposite path. Additionally, America's belief in the superiority of its system and an obligation to spread "civilization" stands in contrast to China's tolerance for international diversity. The status quo powers also responded differently to America and China, in the case of the former eventually ceding influence in the Western Hemisphere to it, and in the case of the latter challenging that influence with renewed vigor. The differences in America's and China's approaches were partially influenced by their differing economic and governmental models.

With respect to the international system, China's foreign policy has shaped, and been shaped by, it. While consistently acting to protect its core interests, China often engaged in international institutionalism as a means of promoting economic development and regional stability. This helped it elevate its guiding principles on the world stage and

also began a process of conditioning it to international norms of behavior. Because it saw more to gain than lose, China largely acted as a status quo power, benefiting from American security in the Asia-Pacific region. However, recently it has demonstrated a greater willingness to forcefully assert its claims over contested territory and challenge American leadership in the global order.

The future holds many possibilities for China. Its progress and development are likely to continue, but perhaps at a slower rate. Additionally, a changing regional and global environment may create opportunities for it to achieve its goals without conflict. Further, as China's relationship with America continues to grow in importance, the benefits of peaceful coexistence and compromise increase. On the other hand, should resentment and fear come to define the relationship, confrontation and conflict may await. Wars between major powers have been a source of change to the international order in the past. Britain and the U.S. avoided this fate in the nineteenth century in part because Britain felt its interests secure in the presence of a hegemonic America. If America can feel the same toward China in the twenty-first century, and given an apparent mutual reluctance to inflame tensions, peace has a chance.

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Conclusion

American foreign policy in the nineteenth century was characterized by independence and unilateralism. The pursuit of free trade and the preservation of neutrality in European affairs were its hallmarks, and it explicitly rejected the European political and commercial systems, as expressed by President Monroe's message to Congress in 1823. These principles would continue to influence American foreign policy into the next century. Monroe's principles became Monroe's doctrine, and later the Monroe Doctrine. As America's interests shifted over time, so did its interpretation of the doctrine, which provided a sense of continuity in foreign policy while taking on new attributes to address the needs of the time.

During that century, America also underwent considerable expansion, first through diplomacy and later through conflict. America's war with Mexico in particular caused concern in Latin America, and in many cases dashed any hope of a Pan-American federation of states united in countering European influence. America's expansionist tendencies also drove Latin American countries closer to Britain, the incumbent global hegemon and preeminent power in the Western Hemisphere.¹

In the latter stages of the nineteenth century America's interventionist foreign policy came to be seen as the obligation of regional hegemony, particularly in relation to the Caribbean and the new territories gained after the Spanish-American War of 1898.² The U.S.'s historical unilateral, self-interested, and anti-European approach took on an expansionist, hegemonic paternalism seeking to spread "civilization" to its benighted southern neighbors. At the same time, British power and influence diminished in relative terms, and a peaceful transition of power occurred.

Like America, China under the PRC began as a relatively weak country surrounded by potential threats. In adopting communism, it rejected representative democracy and capitalism, and also sought to change the bi-polar world order toward a multipolar, democratic system. China's early foreign policy was ideologically driven as Mao sought to incite communist revolutions in weak states and end China's American-imposed diplomatic isolation. The 1970s saw China replace Taiwan in the U.N., the

undeniable Sino-Soviet split, and the beginnings of its opening up to the world in pursuit of rapid economic development.

Deng's leadership from the late 1970s to the early 1990s laid the groundwork for China's subsequent economic miracle. This outcome was by no means assured, however. Internal divisions within China between those supporting Marxism and Soviet-style central planning and those supporting economic liberalization and pragmatism had a stutter step effect on its development. At the same time, China's opening to the world meant it participated more in multilateral organizations and began to socialize its values on the international system.

Twenty-first century China is the world's second largest economy and has the second largest defense budget. It continues to assert its claims over the East and South China Seas and has conducted large-scale land reclamations on contested reefs and rocks. Additionally, Chinese fishing and Coast Guard vessels have clashed with those of neighboring countries. Meanwhile, China's dramatic growth of the preceding decade has slowed, and its current president has reintroduced Marxist ideology, cracked down on dissent of all kinds, and engaged in a far-reaching anti-graft campaign viewed by some as a ploy to consolidate his power. China's newfound aggressiveness has driven surrounding nations into America's orbit, just as nineteenth-century America drove its southern neighbors into Britain's embrace. In response, the American military has conducted provocative demonstrations in the East and South China Seas as a rejection of China's claims of sovereignty over international waters and airspace.

Nineteenth century American and modern Chinese foreign policies have displayed a certain coherence. Both sought to change the existing system of state interaction, expand and consolidate control over their territories, and emphasized economic development. Likewise, a willingness to act unilaterally and assertively in pursuit of core interests has been reflected in both countries' actions. The growth and development of these rising countries was also seen as threatening to the incumbent powers and engendered confrontational responses. Free trade and economic development largely dominated America's and China's relations with the international community. Both also made efforts to avoid conflict so as not to jeopardize that development.

Nonetheless, as each country's comprehensive national power grew, they tended to more willingly and more forcefully press for their values and interests. Likewise, internal politics played a part in dictating foreign policy.

Certainly, differences exist and these are not perfect comparisons. America began as a non-interventionist country and transitioned over time toward becoming a benevolent interventionist. China was interventionist early on, but later espoused and largely held to values of non-intervention and non-interference. Additionally, America sought to spread its system of democratic governance and market capitalism, whereas China has accepted the existing internal organizational structures of its international relations. Moreover, Britain eventually saw that a Western Hemisphere under American hegemony would not jeopardize its access to markets or financial interests, and so accepted its declining influence. On the contrary, America sees many threats to its interests in a rising China that pursues the settlement of territorial disputes outside of international institutions and adjudication mechanisms, or worse through the use of force. Finally, the internal organizing principles and mechanisms by which the two countries develop foreign policy differ, which has had a limited influence on outward behavior.

China's future, and by extension America's, will likely fall somewhere between the peaceful transition of influence in the Western Hemisphere in the nineteenth century and the violent conflict that engulfed Europe and the world in the early and mid-twentieth century. The pace at which the future plays out will be dictated in part by fluctuations in China's rate of development. Additionally, internal political upheavals and domestic unrest may manifest in continued or greater outward assertiveness as a mechanism to satisfy domestic audiences and vested interests. Further, a changing global context, and the fortunes and perceptions of America and China's neighbors, will matter. They will influence China's approach to conflict resolution and its continued attempts to elevate its values to a position of accepted international norms. While the potential for confrontation to end in conflict and great-power war exists, and has occurred repeatedly throughout history, the potential for a peaceful alternative remains within reach. The more America and its Asia-Pacific allies feel their interests secure in a region increasingly dominated by China, the more likely peace will prevail.

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